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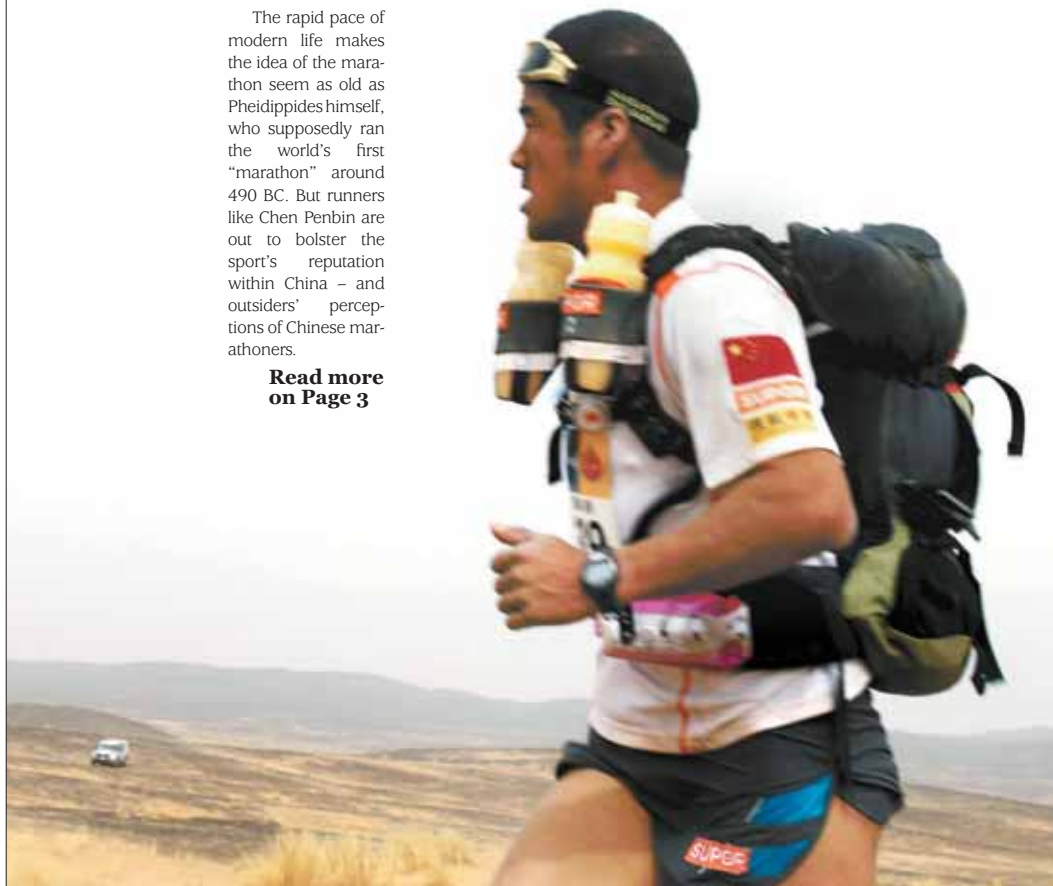


北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

RUNNING for China

The rapid pace of modern life makes the idea of the marathon seem as old as Pheidippides himself, who supposedly ran the world's first "marathon" around 490 BC. But runners like Chen Penbin are out to bolster the sport's reputation within China – and outsiders' perceptions of Chinese marathoners.

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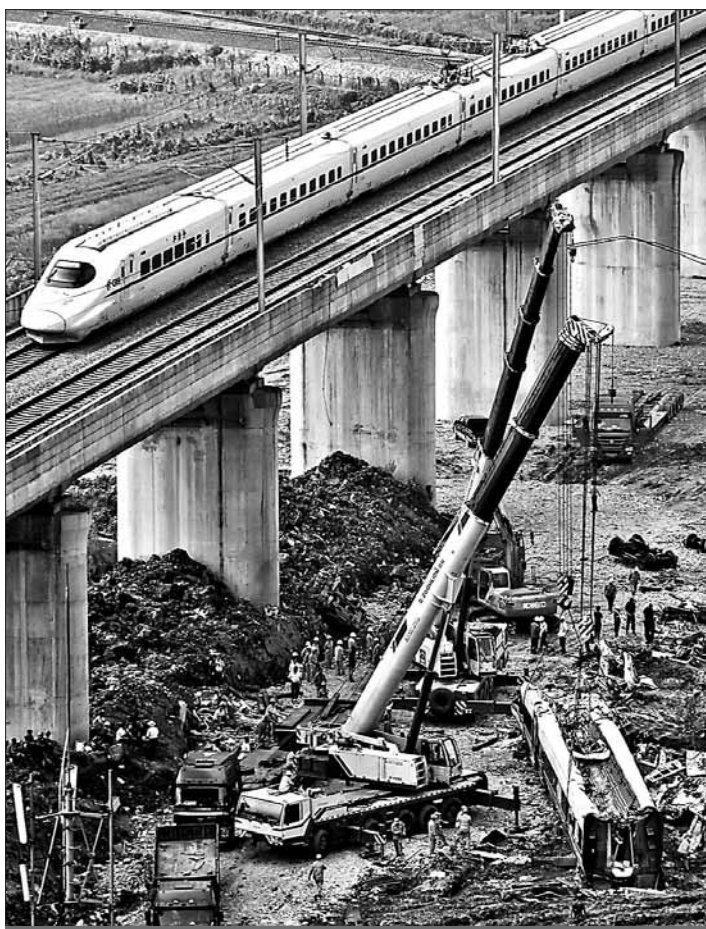
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Power of competition

The 1st Beijing International Ballet and Choreography Competition aims to identify talented young dancers and retain domestic talent.

Photo by Gao Shang

Repercussions of train crash



A high-speed train passes the site of a collision, where workers work to remove wreckage.

CFP Photo

Chinese premier Wen Jiabao on Thursday urged the Ministry of Railways (MOR) to give an "honest answer" to the people on the way it had handled the aftermath of a fatal train crash.

Wen was speaking to reporters at the site of the weekend crash of two high-speed trains near Wenzhou in eastern China's Zhejiang Province that killed 39 people and injured 192 others.

"I called the minister of railways soon after the crash happened, and what I said to him was just two words - 'save people'," said Wen.

"The Ministry of Railways should give an honest answer to the people as to whether it has conformed with this principle in dealing with the collision," he said.

The high-speed train collision in China last Saturday shocked the world, and the way the country's railway administrators have handled the aftermath has done nothing to reassure the public of its professionalism.

Although it apologized to passengers and re-declared confidence in the country's high-speed train technologies, the MOR is still facing widespread criticism of the way it handled the accident. The public is also lashing out at the ministry as it grows increasingly concerned about transportation safety.

An initial investigation into the accident indicates that design flaws in railway signal equipment led to the collision, the Shanghai Railway Bureau said on Thursday.

Internet chatrooms and microblogging sites were filled with angry outbursts after an

online video showed a carriage was buried instead of being taken away for further investigation, triggering concerns that the true reason for the crash might be buried along with it.

"The headstock was buried under the viaduct to make the rescue easier," said Wang Yongping, an MOR spokesman.

"I don't know whether you are convinced, but I am," he told reporters at a press conference.

Concerns were also raised as a toddler was found alive after railway authorities announced that there were no vital signs at the accident site and began to tear apart train carriages.

The ministry, as it monopolizes the country's rail transport, has long been dubbed "tie lao da," or "big rail brother," for its indifference to passengers' needs, despite a raft of reform measures implemented to promote market-oriented development over the past decades.

Debt risks, corruption and rail safety are also on the list of railway problems as the country rapidly expands its high-speed railway networks to improve transportation and boost the economy.

It would be a tough task for the ministry to win back public faith in railways, analysts have said.

"Public forgiveness can only be obtained by disclosing the truth. To regain public trust, the ministry has to probe the cause of the accident and honestly inform the public," said Song Shinan, a columnist.

(Xinhua)

Three foreigners confirmed dead

By Chu Meng

At least three foreigners have been confirmed dead in the crash, including one Italian, Assunta Liguori, and a Chinese American couple, Cao Erxin and Chen Zengrong.

Liguori, a 22-year-old female exchange student, was the first confirmed foreign casualty in the accident.

According to Stampa Pechino, a press officer from the Italian embassy in Beijing, she was an orientation studies major at the University of Napoli and traveled to China as a model student during summer vacation. She was on a sightseeing trip with her boyfriend, Giovanni Pan, who was seriously injured and is under supervision in an intensive care unit in a hospital in Wenzhou.

The two were going to take an internship at a Chinese company in Shanghai in order to learn Chinese and experience the culture. Liguori's Facebook showed that she loved to travel and loved Chinese culture. She can speak Arabic, Chinese and English, and was called "Princess Sissy" by friends. Her dream was to become a diplomat in an Asian country.

She sent a message to her parents in Italy via cell phone only 10 hours before the accident.

"Liguori's parents arrived at the Italian Consulate in Shanghai on Tuesday. Officers from the consulate are engaged in coordinating affairs like compensation and transportation of remains with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and related Chinese governmental departments," Pechino said.

Besides 500,000 yuan compensation from the Chinese government, her parents will also receive international travel and personal accident compensations from Italian insurance companies," Pechino said.

According to the Italian embassy, Pan, a 23-year-old Chinese Italian, is still hooked to a respirator at No. 2 People's Hospital in Wenzhou. His parents have also arrived at the hospital



Italian student Assunta Liguori's dream was to become a diplomat in an Asian country.

with the help of the Italian consulate in Shanghai.

When the accident occurred, Pan was in train D3115, which was rear-ended by D301. He was seriously injured and was separated from his girlfriend in the collision. In the hospital, he keeps asking about his girlfriend.

"Where is my girlfriend? Is she OK? If you meet her, please ask her whether she is fine, and tell her I miss her," Xinhua News reported him as saying.

"In the crash, his neck, spine and lungs were injured. He's now in a stable condition, but not out of danger," said You Rongkai, director of the hospital's emergency medicine department. "He was awake when taken here, but suffered oxygen deficiency. The situation was critical."

Pan's parents were born in Wenzhou and run a business in Italy. This was going to be his first time back in Wenzhou in six years.

He intended to take his girlfriend to visit his grandparents in his hometown. They went to the same university and had been together for one year. Her name is tattooed on his shoulders.

You said Pan may be bedridden for six months.

Richard Buangan, spokesman from the US embassy in Beijing, confirmed that American citizens Cao and Chen died in the collision.

"Their son, Cao Lixing, was seriously injured and is in critical condition in the ICU at No. 3 People's Hospital in Wenzhou. Most of their family members are in Fuzhou, capital city of Fujian Province," Buangan said.

Marathon's long road in China

By Li Zhixin

It is fabled that some 2,500 years ago, Greek messenger Pheidippides ran from Marathon to Athens without stopping to deliver news of a battlefield victory. He collapsed immediately and died, and to this day, the marathon – a 42.192 kilometer race – has been run in his honor.

The marathon, however, is only 30 years old in China. There is a Chinese saying that a man should be independent at age 30. What about the marathon?



The opening of the Beijing Marathon. CFP Photo

The fisherman that had legs

Sitting on a couch in Sculpting Time Cafe last Saturday, 33-year-old long-distance runner Chen Penbin talked about his experiences at the Sultan Marathon Des Sables from April 3 to 9, a grueling six-day endurance test across the Sahara Desert in Morocco.

Chen, the first runner from the Chinese mainland to participate in the race, placed 56th among the 849 competitors who dared to run the 243-kilometer course.

"Results from top marathon events have long been dominated by European and North African runners, so people always think Chinese runners aren't physically qualified to compete," Chen said.

But his performance – he finished despite a leg injury – earned the respect of fellow competitors.

"I realized, after finishing the race, that Chinese people can compete," he said.

But why are there so few Chinese runners in the worldwide marathon scene? Chen said cost was one reason: the registration fee for the Sultan Marathon Des Sables was about 26,000 yuan.

Another reason is people's attitude towards running.

"Endurance events are very popular among those who look to challenge themselves, but few Chinese people are interested in such challenges due to the rapid pace of modern life," he said.

Chen was born in a small fishing village in Taizhou, Zhejiang Province, and always enjoyed sports while growing up. He first became interested in endurance sports in 2001 – he was inadvertently participating in them, as he often had to carry water from a mountain to his village.

Eventually he got a job as

a security guard at a cookware company, and was lucky enough to have his boss' blessing to take part in running competitions.

Su Xianze, his boss, said he supports Chen because he believes that Chinese people can perform as well as foreigners in running events.

In the last 10 years, Chen has taken part in a number of long-distance runs, winning 50 medals across the country, including 26 gold medals. He won the National Mountain Outdoor Sports Tournament in Guizhou Province in 2007 and the Gobi March Marathon in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in 2009.

In addition to the Sultan Marathon Des Sables, he was the first Chinese mainland runner to participate in the Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc in France and the North Face 50 Mile Endurance Challenge in San Francisco.

Because there aren't many high-level runners in China, Chen has to rely on himself in his training.

It hasn't been easy.

"The first time I ran the marathon was around the Alps in France in 2009, and both of my knees were frost-bitten as I knew nothing about the surroundings," he said.

However, more Chinese people have joined Chen recently. The gap between China and the world, at one time insurmountable, has begun to shrink.

Development in China

The marathon was introduced in China as an independent competition in 1981, with Beijing hosting the first international marathon in the country in that year. The inaugural race, however, was only open to "professional" runners.

It wasn't until 1998 that the



Chen Penbin at the Sultan Marathon Des Sables



Chen finished 56th at the Sultan Marathon.

Photos provided by Chen Penbin

race was finally open to the public. The Beijing International Marathon is now considered among the 10 best marathons in the world.

"At one time, only a few hundred runners participated in the Beijing Marathon," Chen said. After the Olympics, however, "the sport became more popular in China, and 30,000 enrolled last year."

Dalian, Shanghai, Xiamen, Zhengzhou, Hangzhou and Lanzhou also began holding mara-

thons in the 1990s, benefiting from strong support from local governments.

"Hosting a marathon is like putting out a name card to the rest of the world," said Zhang Zhaohui, an official on the Beijing Marathon Committee. "It can improve tourism and a bunch of other industries, attract outside investment and drive further development."

Running clubs have also proliferated, attracting more people to outdoor sports.

Come a long way, but still a long way to go

While the marathon has made great strides within China in terms of scale and professionalism in the last 30 years, its popularity is still relatively low.

"In Europe and North America, the marathon gets the most participation among outdoor events," said Wei Chao, head of Super Runner Club. "In China, people with free time engage in leisure instead of sports."

They prefer hiking and walking over long-distance running, Wei added.

What's more, the marathon's development has been limited to big cities. "Games are usually clustered in economically developed cities, and participants are also mainly from the provinces of east-central China," he said.

The skill level of participants is also lacking. "Take the Beijing Marathon, for instance," Wei said. "Only a tenth of participants actually finish the full distance within the stipulated time."

Unlike in other countries, Chinese marathons are organized by the government. "The events aren't always professional in terms of management, operation and sponsorship when compared to Europe and America," said Huang Qiang, an HP employee who has participated in many marathons worldwide.

"Many domestic events only aim to promote the city's image and make money instead of popularizing the sport itself, so the competition is lacking," he said. "Maybe it takes time for the government and its citizens to change their attitude."

Although many factors need to be improved, there is great potential. The number of runners has increased threefold in the last 10 years. "There were only 200,000 to 300,000 outdoor enthusiasts in the 1990s, but the number now tops 10 million," Zhang said. "Such development still continues, improving living standards and strengthening health."

Staging for profit?

Think twice before shelling out for big shows



New replica in Dali

Following Zhang Yimou's success, Chen Kaige created *Xiyi*, adopted from a local tale and staged in Dali starting from July 6. It cost 200 million yuan and took three years to finish.

Critics complained, however, that it upset the local environment and ruined the ancient town.

The play is staged in Cangshan Mountain next to the Beimen Reservoir, which was built in 1958 and used by farmers to irrigate fields. But ever since Chen's play began, farmers have complained that they've been unable to access the reservoir for water.

"There are two reservoirs in Dali, with one in the north and the other in the south, known as 'a pair of dragon eyes,'" a native Dali who goes by Cangshan Oldboy told *Beijing Today*. He said the two reservoirs had irrigated fields for decades.

"The 'northern eye' is being occupied for the play," he said. "Farmers now have to divert water from Erhai [the second largest freshwater lake in Yunnan Province], adding burden to their work and destroying natural resources."

The Dali tourism resort management committee said the reservoir has become a problem for local officials since it was polluted with hospital sewage and household wastewater, Guangzhou-based *Yangcheng Evening News* reported.

According to the committee, both the water quality and environment has improved since the start of *Xiyi*. The reservoir can continue to irrigate fields as before, the committee said.

It also said that 40 tons of fish from the reservoir were purchased by an investor and transferred to Erhai.

Tourism remedy?

Many locals have criticized the play for spoiling the ancient town's culture and feel.

Dali, whose full name is Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, is home to many ethnic Bai people, who have influenced the city's architecture and culture.

A 30-meter high steel bridge was built across the stage, which is highly incompatible with the surrounding ancient buildings of the Bai people. Also, since the plays happen during the evenings, from 8:30 to 10 pm, they can be very disturbing for

By Zhang Dongya

This year could well be called the year of live-action performances.

A large-scale play called Kangxi Ceremony began running in June in Chengde, Hebei Province. This month, movie director Chen Kaige launched a stage play in Dali, Yunnan Province. Other similar plays are in various stages of planning.

All are spin-offs of filmmaker Zhang Yimou's "Impression" series: *Impression Lijiang* and *Impression Liusanjie*. Both performances boosted local tourism. Zhang has produced six plays as part of the Impression series, with a seventh that will be ready by the end of the year.

"Live-action performances have proved successful in the past, and there's a large market demand," said Tiger Wu, a professor at Peking University and director of the Center for Recreation and Tourism Research (CRTR). "But not all cities are suitable for this tourism developing mode. The local government has to tailor its own productions."



The first live-action play, *Impression Liusanjie*, has been running for seven years in Guilin and has greatly boosted local tourism.

locals. One commented on Weibo, "The ancient town is spoiled. I can hear music even from the foot of the mountain. How do people inside the town stand it?"

Dali's tourism bureau said it approved the play as a way of reinvigorating sluggish tourism.

More tourists have flooded into Yunnan in the last decade, but Dali has often been bypassed for more popular destinations such as Kunming, Lijiang and Shangri-la. Those going from Kunming to Lijiang think of Dali as a layover, spending a couple hours there only.

The large open-air theater was built in order to get travelers to stay the night. The theater has 4,000 seats that sell for 280 to 680 yuan. A receptionist said half-price tickets are offered to tour groups or individuals buying in bulk.

The local government expects the theater to attract 3,000 tourists they would not have otherwise. Because plays

are held in the evenings, playgoers end up having dinner in town, then hitting up the bars. Every yuan spent is a boost for the local economy.

"Most Chinese tourists focus on sight-seeing and visiting scenic spots during the day and lack activities for the evening," Wu said. "Live performances can fill that void."

Impression Liusanjie, the first live-action performance created by Zhang Yimou, has been staged more than 2,000 times since 2004 in Guilin. Its box office earnings exceeded 600 million yuan after just five years. With Guilin's temperate weather, it can be staged year-round.

Dali's tourism bureau looks at this show as its model.

Irrational trend

But the proliferation of these large-scale plays seems irrational. After *Impression*, similar plays were created in Hangzhou and Zhoushan in Zhejiang

Province, in Chengde, in Fujian and Hainan provinces, and even in Beijing, which staged *Back to Yongle* near the Ming Tombs earlier this month. It has been criticized for upsetting the local environment and ruining the ancient town's feel.

CFP Photos

Province, in Chengde, in Fujian and Hainan provinces, and even in Beijing, which staged *Back to Yongle* near the Ming Tombs earlier this month.

The *Impression* series expanded to six plays, with a seventh in production in Wulong County in Chongqing. With a 200-million-yuan investment, it's expected to be as big as its predecessors.

Not all performances have been very good. *Impression Xihu*, staged on Hangzhou's famous West Lake, barely attracted anyone. Chengde, which is known as a "summer resort," gets too cold at night, so it was not unusual to see audience members leaving early.

These plays also don't always mesh with local culture. *Impression Hainan Island* is considered a failure because it didn't incorporate any local elements. People said it might as well have been staged in Hawaii.

"Simple replication is untenable," Wu said. "The open-air performance is surely not suitable for Harbin or north-eastern cities."

And, it seems, for cities who lack better ideas.



Chen Kaige

Weighty problems

China getting fatter, but not like the US

Chinese people are starting to look a lot more like Americans these days, as the waistlines of urban children and adolescents grow. However, a deeper look says something else is happening.

Young boys from well-off Chinese families who are supposedly physically active and eat plenty of vegetables but few sweets are more likely to be overweight, according to a recent study.

The new findings, published in the *American Journal of Health Behavior*, said that though obesity rates in both China and the US have surged over the years, the patterns are different.

In the US and even Europe, people have waistline sizes correlated to the degree of their poverty. Obese populations tend to be from poor families with a lower edu-

cational background and where fresh produce is less available.

In China, however, with disposable incomes growing, families can now afford to eat a lot more food and buy certain foods that used to be unaffordable. Children from families with higher incomes and an advanced education are more likely to become obese.

Also, Chinese boys are more likely to be overweight than Chinese girls, the study said. In the US, boys are just as likely as girls to be overweight.

(Agencies)



More than 200 million Chinese are overweight and another 60 million are obese.

The third eye

Society and culture play a big part in obesity

By Huang Daohen

While many blame the country's increasing obesity rate on the rapidly expanding economy, Xu Ming, a health economist and associate professor with Beijing Sports University, ties it to societal and cultural changes.

Many countries have similar problems with obesity, but what is unusual in China is that it has happened suddenly.

"Just a generation ago, you could hardly find anyone who was overweight, and then there was an explosion of people

with increasing waistlines in the streets," Xu said.

Statistics from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention show that there are now more than 300 million people overweight, with another 60 million obese. The authority expects cases of obesity to significantly increase in the next decade.

Economic progress may give children easier access to junk foods that have lower nutrition. However, Xu believes social reasons like lack of time and room to

exercise are the key problems.

Xu, who has a 9-year-old son nicknamed Xiao Hui, said the boy has to leave for school at 7 am and doesn't return until 6 pm. "So after dinner and homework, there is no time for anything like exercise," he said.

Since many families like Xu have just one child due to the one-child-policy, these children are sometimes spoiled. Xu said he would buy his son whatever he wants to eat.

Even when time allows, it's hard to

find a proper place to exercise. "There is less and less public space in the city now, and you often cannot walk on the grass, let alone play soccer," Xu said.

Although Xiao Hui eats lots of vegetables and seldom eats sweets and fast food, he weighs 50 kilograms.

This indicates that influences on obesity in China are more society-dependent, Xu said. He suggested that policymakers see the bigger picture in their attempts to stem the rising epidemic of obesity through social and cultural factors.

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Secondhand luxury goods shops are gaining popularity following price rises in luxury brands' custom tariffs.

Photo provided by Secoo

Secondhand craze

Sales of used luxury goods boom in China

By Wei Xi

Gao Xiao (pseudonym) had an annoying surprise recently: she found her lost diamond ring. The problem is she had bought another one already.

Luckily, a new business could help Gao out. She can consign the ring and sell it at a lower price. That's why Gao turned to Yi Zhongli, communication director of Secoo, a newly opened luxury goods consignment store.

Yi said people like Gao are growing in number.

The store, located in the central business district (CBD), deals with upscale handbags, glasse and accessories, with brands including Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Hermes, Cartier, Burberry, and Prada.

"It is a platform where people can sell, buy and exchange secondhand or new luxury items," Yi said. Sellers can take their

goods to Secoo, where the goods are identified by gemologists and prices are negotiated with sellers according to the quality of the goods, she said.

"They do not need to pay for the identification or the storage of their goods in our store, but once their goods are sold, 10 percent of the money will be taken as a service fee."

For buyers, Yi said, it is a place they can get a real brand product, which can be brand new, for a much lower price. Or they may find a limited edition item that is sold out in other shops for years.

"Besides, people can also exchange their goods with any products of the same price in our store. Anything bought from Secoo enjoys after-sale service as well, such as clean-up and care for leather products," Yi said.

Along with the consignment store, Secoo also has its online

shop secoo.com, where buyers can find new products and purchase through the Internet.

"Every product we have in the store will be pictured and put online. Buyers can either choose to pay online and have the product mailed or pay at our store and get the product in person," Yi said.

"The first consignment store of Secoo was opened in October 2008 in Jinan, Shandong Province, and we had another in Beijing at CBD Guomao the next year," said Li Rixue, CEO of Secoo. "The one on Jinbao Street [in CBD] is just an enlargement of the Guomao store."

With about 500,000 registered club members and 12 chains around the country, the sales volume of Secoo has surged. "In 2010 the sales volume was over 30 million yuan. But in June 2011 alone, we had a business volume of

over 10 million yuan, and we are expecting a sales volume of over 200 million this year," Li said.

However, China is still behind European and American countries when it comes to dealing with unused luxury goods.

"The main problem is that in China, we do not have a special identification institution and therefore many people cannot tell the fake from the real," Li said. "Besides, consignment stores in other countries provide after-sales services as well, which is also lacking in China."

Xiong Xiaoge, founding partner of IDG Capital, is optimistic about the business. That is why IDG injected \$10 million into Secoo. "The consignment sale mechanism can help stimulate transactions of secondhand goods," Xiong said, adding that the luxury market is still largely untapped in China.

Market watch

Are secondhand luxuries a new business craze?

By Huang Daohen

Secondhand goods, but with a first-hand demand: that is how Wen Yijun, analyst with Oriental Securities, describes the market for secondhand luxuries in China.

Though selling unwanted luxury goods isn't new, as it is popular in other countries like the UK, Italy and France, Wen said it was an idea that would definitely work in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai.

"It's potentially a big market as more people can afford to buy more luxury goods, and more unwanted luxuries remain," he said.

A recent report by the World Luxury Association said that consumers in the Chinese mainland pursuing luxury products have now reached about 200 million, accounting for 16 percent of the country's population.

The association predicts that the number of consumers in the sector is still rising at a rate of 25 percent per year.

But not everyone wants to pay full price for their favorite luxury goods, especially at a time when suppliers of new luxury products increase prices due to high tariff taxes.

Wen said that this promotes the sales of secondhand luxury

goods. Price differences between newly bought and secondhand luxuries items can range from 20 percent to 80 percent, depending on the condition.

"The secondhand business is thus a triple-win situation," Wen said.

It is attractive for young consumers who have less money, and creates a high turnover rate for secondhand owners. What's more, a high volume of product transactions means higher profits for the business dealer.

Businessman Guan Cun opened a secondhand luxury store on Taobao, an e-commerce platform. His business includes

consignment and purchasing of used items.

Guan said his customers are mainly middle-income office workers. Top brand handbags and watches are the most popular items in his store, which usually sell at half of their original price.

"Customers are now more brand-aware. They come for luxury brands either out of fondness or as status symbols," Guan said.

Wen agreed. The secondhand luxury market caters to these desires, and the potential demand can create a new business craze, he said.

Rothschild targets China

By Yao Weijie

Lord Jacob Rothschild, the chairman of RIT Capital Partners and the focus of the famous Chinese book *Currency Wars*, traveled to Beijing this week to promote the JRC private equity fund that will raise the yuan in China and allow Chinese investors to invest overseas.

Rothschild wants to raise \$750 million through the fund. It is being operated under the strategy of "raising domestic, investing overseas."

It is difficult for Chinese individuals and companies to invest overseas because of tight Chinese capital and currency controls. The capital markets have been opening up gradually to allow private enterprises to invest in overseas companies and create opportunities for these companies to enter the Chinese market, but the process has been slow.

The JRC fund, which is a joint venture between RIT Capital, Chinese investment group the Creat Group and investment advisory company Quercus Associates, is one of only two funds that have gained regulatory approval.

"In addition to the \$100 million seed funding, the remaining \$650 million of the JRC fund will come from Chinese private enterprises. The fund will focus on various sectors in European and American countries, including pharmaceuticals, bio-technology, clean energy, high-end equipment, environmental protection and IT technology," said Rothschild in last week's speech at Peking University.

Industrial output is only 3 percent of GDP in China now, which will increase to 20 percent before the end of 2020. "This unique venture will allow China's private sector to invest in Western companies, while providing opportunities for Western companies to enter China's rapidly growing and vibrant economy," said Rothschild when the fund was announced in March.

Some scholars think there are many other benefits as well.

"The Chinese government took many measures to reduce the influence of inflation. The Central Bank has increased interest rates three times and raised the reserve ratio six times during the first half of 2011. The policy took effect and inhibited overheated investment. In this condition, investing idle funds to overseas projects is a good choice," said Yu Huayi, Professor at the School of Finance of Renmin University.

The first time the Rothschild family came to China was in the 1830s. They operated a small business trading gold and silver out of Shanghai. Today the name is famous in China not only because of Chateau Lafite, the Rothschild wine in high demand among rich Chinese, but also because of the Chinese book *Currency Wars*, in which the Rothschild family are the main characters.

A city of happiness?

By Zhao Hongyi

On July 25, the city government of Zhuhai, Guangdong Province announced that it had won the patent of "City of Happiness" from the National Patent Bureau after years of applying.

It is part of the city's efforts to promote its overall status and gain a name for its tourism industry.

"The other Chinese cities will not be able to register and use

this patent for 10 years," Zhang Meisheng, party secretary of the city's tourism bureau, said at the press conference held on the same day.

The city will promote its tourism industry and overall image under this moniker. To this purpose, it has planned to develop the overall tourism industry, including accommodation, transportation, construction and marketing.

Zhuhai is close to Shenzhen and was one of the four pioneer cities in China's economic opening up in the early 1980s. It has been trying to find a suitable name for itself from the very beginning.

In the 1990s, the city was labeled as the "capital of romance" to promote tourism. In 2006, the city found Dalian, another coastal city in northern Liaoning Province,

had registered the phrase "capital of romance" with the National Patent Bureau years ago.

From then on, Zhuhai started to change its face from "romance" to "happiness."

Zhuhai and Dalian are not the only Chinese cities interested in registering a suitable tagline for their city.

Nanjing labels itself the "city of universal love," Hong

Kong is the "city of dynamics," Paris has the title of "capital of elegance" and New York is the "capital of the world," the party secretary remarked.

The city won the title of "the happiest city" with nine other cities on the Chinese mainland in 2007. Zhang said this title is higher than "romance" and they will continue to develop their city based on the patent and title.



People in Zhuhai celebrate the award of the City of Happiness patent. But many doubt whether happiness can be gained through application.

Feng Zhufeng/CFR Photo

Comment

Happiness cannot be applied for and registered

"City of Happiness" is not a registrable title. It must be developed and pursued with great effort. Zhuhai is one of the most livable cities in China, accredited by UNEP, thanks to its natural environment. But happiness must be built on the basis of concrete development.

The city government should focus on local development rather than patent application and registration.

— Roderio Garay, student from Chile

The patent and title is not prohibited

A city can apply for and register a patent as a tagline to

promote itself to spur development. But it doesn't prove that the city is already a "city of happiness." Doing is much more important than labeling. Zhuhai has won the label for its tourism but it has no right to prevent other cities from using the title in other fields. I believe that many Chinese cities are much happier than Zhuhai.

— Sun Cheng, lawyer, Laite Lawyer Office

Local residents are the judges

Happiness should be evaluated by the local residents in the city, not applied for and registered by the officials from the patent authority. Those living in big cities like Zhuhai face

increasing living costs, work pressures and an unclear future. These are the general complaints from city dwellers in China. How to solve these problems and others that are occurring is more urgent than what the officials in Zhuhai are doing.

— Wang Jun, professor of social science, Peking University

Weibo has copyrights problem too

By Zhang Dongya

"I randomly picked a Weibo message I just wrote and searched to find unexpectedly that there were 195 people who had copied it to their Weibo without attribution!" Kaifu Lee, CEO of Innovation Works, wrote in his Weibo earlier this month.

He showed the link and screenshot image of the search result on his Weibo. The latest search showed the number had increased to 219, which means more Weibo users are still copying his words.

Lee's actions follow those of Zheng Yuanjie, writer of children's literature and dubbed "King of Fairy Tales" in the country, who complained his Weibo was plagiarized by a user named Fangyuo07 without even any change in punctuation.

Fangyuo07 pasted the same content and the picture in his Weibo and just deleted the last sentence when copying from Zheng.

"I beg you to spare some time to change at least the punctua-

tion. Though it came from news, the final content needs an angle, judgment and arrangement for the words — a kind of creation — Zheng said.

Zheng emphasized the user who copied his Weibo is a "V user," who was certificated by Sina as a real-name user. Fangyuo07 has about 2,700 followers on Sina Weibo. The item copied from Zheng was forwarded more than 23,000 times and got about 6,000 comments. On average, his Weibo would usually be forwarded just a few dozen times and receive a couple of comments.

Weibo users hold different views about this issue. Some said "we use it because we value you," and some pointed out that many who forwarded the message were only machines. It is said many Weibo users are not real people, but are created by the supplier for other usage, including selling to those who want to increase followers and site visitors.

Comment

"Works"?

One has the copyright of works that feature creative expression or are related to his intellectual efforts. Not all words, like several sentences, are recognized as "works." Therefore, the first thing is to judge whether the 140-word Weibo message could be considered as "works." If the user copied a message for commercial use, people could resort to law. Usually, people will consider the cost, process and effect before starting a lawsuit. So it is still not desirable to use the law to deal with the Weibo issue. Personally, I suggest the Weibo supplier could correct or ban such things technically. Meanwhile, it should strengthen education in netizens in order to enhance their awareness of respecting others' works.

— Xu Xinming, lawyer, Beijing Mingtai Law Firm

We should value all original works

Weibo users could forward the message by regular ways instead of taking others' as their own original work. If they quote, they should offer the origin; otherwise it is a breach of tort law. No matter how long or how short, it is original and should be protected. People should go against the tort, or at least condemn the behavior. It is a copy-and-paste era, especially online. Since each user is independent, it is hard for the Weibo supplier to check all content. Therefore, the most important thing is to cultivate netizens' consciousness to value original works.

— Zred, photographer

Copycats never win

I don't take Weibo seriously. I seldom forward others' but write my own stuff. If others copy mine, it is only after what I wrote, that is to say, they will

always be second. People will know who really wrote interesting things and finally will follow me, not them. Also, celebrities can get many people to comment. If an unknown person copies the content, it does not have the same effect. People who are good at creating an original Weibo always write more, and those copycats can get one or two, but not all of them all the time.

— XY Chen, screenwriter

Plagiarism is ugly

Many people hold that it is no big deal to copy a Weibo message, but actually it reflects a very bad habit in the country. In the legal system, people should defend their copyright and original works. Online, netizens should respect others works and keep self-discipline. Plagiarism is ugly, no matter where or when or in whatever situation.

— boreyz, Weibo user

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Norwegian Embassy mourns victims

By Chu Meng

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing, the Norwegian Consulates in Shanghai and Guangzhou, and the Norwegian Honorary Consulate in Hong Kong flew their national flag at half-mast to after the shocking attacks that killed 76 people last Friday in Oslo and Utoya Island.

A three-day half-mast condolence began in Norway's embassy at No. 1 East Street in Sanlitun in Beijing at 4 pm last Saturday.

Yang Lei, press officer at the Norwegian Embassy in Beijing, said they had called off all routine visits or cultural events in Beijing. The attacks are the worst in the country since World War II.

"The ambassador is paying close attention to the progress of events back in Norway in order to share core information with Norwegians in China. We are also fully prepared to facilitate Norwegians here who want to go back home at present. But we have also notified them that it currently might not be a good time to do so," Yang said.

Until yesterday, bunches of



Norwegian embassy in Beijing flew their national flag at half-mast to mourn the attack.

flowers, candles and cards could be seen in front of the gate of the embassy.

"Each day, many Norwegian students from international schools, employees and tourists in Beijing and from surrounding cities like Tianjin come here to show their condolences to the death. Some of them present flowers in tears, light candles and sing the national anthem," he said.

Ambassador Svein Ole Saether expressed his thoughts in a letter to media shortly after the events: "Our priority is to help save lives and to care for the wounded and those who

have lost their loved ones. Our thoughts and sympathy go out to the families of the victims."

Sven Karlsen, a Norwegian who has worked in Beijing for two years, said, "It is extremely inhuman. And they were still university students and children."

According to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao sent a letter of condolence on July 23 to Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg regarding the attack. Wen condemned the attacks, expressed condolences to the victims and extended sympathy to the bereaved families.



76 people dead from the shocking attack.



Flowers are laid and tears are shed for the deceased.

Photos provided by The Mirror

Israeli ambassador receives Chengdu honor

By Han Manman

The Israeli ambassador to China, Amos Nadai, was granted honorary citizenship of Chengdu earlier this month, a city he has visited the most during his time in office. This is the first time such an honor has been bestowed on a foreign ambassador.

Chengdu mayor Ge Honglin presented the ambassador with his citizenship certificate, thanking him for his contribution to the development of the city and his efforts to tighten relations between Chengdu and Israel.

The honor came after the Israeli embassy in Beijing held a weeklong Israeli culture and com-

merce celebration in Chengdu last November. The event marked the 18th anniversary of Israel-China diplomatic relations and the first time Israel has fully presented itself to the Chinese people.

"In the four years as ambassador to China, I've been to many provinces and cities, two times at most, but Chengdu is an exception," Nadai said. "I've been there several times. Therefore, I am very partial to Chengdu," he said.

Ambassador to China since August 2007, Nadai said Chengdu and Israel began exchanges a long time ago. But the ties between both grew stronger following the devastating earthquake that hit Sichuan

Province in 2008.

The ambassador said previous cooperation was mainly focused on the agricultural sector. "However, the devastating Wenchuan earthquake was the turning point in terms of expanding cooperation," he said.

Soon after the disaster, Chengdu spared no effort in rescuing two trapped Israeli students in the earthquake. The Israeli media followed up the story, enabling Israelis to build on their own relationship with Chengdu.

The ambassador said Chengdu was the priority choice for Israel when choosing partners for cooperation. He said many Israeli businessmen seek

consultation from the Israeli embassy in China on what city is best for investment and he always recommends Chengdu because "they will be treated earnestly in Chengdu."

The Israeli embassy is also currently cooperating with Xinjiang to tackle desertification. He said since Israel has prior experience in desertification control, it can introduce many advanced methods to Xinjiang. These include helping local farmers grow the same amount of crops using 50 percent less water.

"The local people have learned everything that we can offer them and they can do it alone now," Nadai said.



Amos Nadai (left) was granted honorary citizenship by the mayor of Chengdu.

Photo provided by Israeli Embassy

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Is juggling more sport than performance?

By Wei Xi

For most of us, juggling isn't much more than a highly technical performance. But Federico Moro, founder of Beijing Jugglers, regards it more as a sport.

Moro said he learned juggling at the age of about 20 while on holiday in France.

"I learned how to juggle three balls, and after that I realized if I could do that, I could do anything I want. It's just a matter of practice," he said.

Moro began learning different kinds of juggling, then began teaching children how to juggle.

Six years ago, Moro came to Beijing and found many others interested in juggling. He then created Beijing Jugglers, a community of juggling lovers.

"Asia has a deep tradition of juggling, but young people are paying less and less attention to it," Moro said. "I hope they can know that juggling can be fun and communicative."

Moro said juggling helps people develop their coordination are necessary. A bunch of people juggling together can help everyone learn faster.

"But practice is the issue," Moro said. "It's not hard to teach a person how to juggle, but one needs to practice a lot."

Beijing Jugglers, based in Fangjia Hutong, has about 250 members. About 20 to 30 regularly attend get-togethers.

Jin Xiuyan, 53, is a retired teacher. She has been to four juggling sessions and has learned to juggle three balls.



Beijing Jugglers get together twice a week at Fangjia Hutong.

Photos provided by Federico Moro

"Fede is a very nice person," Jin said. "He is willing to teach juggling to anyone who would like to learn, and never forces learners to buy his juggling tools."

French teacher Jean-Baptiste Lepeu, who has loved juggling since childhood, has known Moro for two years.

He said they have performed at various events, includ-

ing a music festival on the Great Wall last month.

Moro said European juggling empathizes movement; Japanese juggling is about tricks and Chinese juggling prizes numbers.

"But all jugglers are creative, easygoing and open-minded," he said. "They like to share what they learn, they like to

challenge their limits and they understand the importance of play in the life of every well-balanced adult."

Where: Yi Liao Juggling Shop, 30 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 4-7 pm, every Sunday; 7-9 pm, every Monday

Email: beijingjugglers@gmail.com

Local conservation group sets sights on ethnic Qiang village in Sichuan

By Yao Weijie

The Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP) announced Saturday it will try to protect the cultural heritage of A'er village, focusing on recording its ethnic Qiang culture and villagers' customs.

After the Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008, A'er, where a large group of Qiang people live, was badly destroyed.

The remote village is located deep in a valley on the Tibetan Plateau near the upper reaches of the Min River. Due to its isolated location, the village has become one of the last major repositories of traditional Qiang culture.

CHP, which is partially funded by the US and Swiss embassies, began a revitalization effort in 2009.

Six volunteers, experts in film and TV, science and law, were chosen online in Beijing.

"The trip to the A'er village was unforgettable," said Wang Yunxiao, a professor of law at Renmin University and the leader of the group.

Wang led the group in helping



Ethnic Qiang culture is being preserved by the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center.

Photo provided by CHP

A'er villagers one step at a time. They organized a team comprising shibi, who are authoritative intellectuals from Qiang culture, village officials and warm-hearted villagers.

They celebrated the new Qiang calendar year with villagers in heavy snow amid ruins, and eventually won their trust.

In the end, the volunteers

helped villagers compile and publish a book about their culture.

Before the earthquake, there were many writers, sociologists and activists who visited A'er to investigate their unique culture. The villagers were getting used to their visits. Gradually, villagers realized they had something unique, said Guo Ping, a volunteer. "But they never told their

own stories to the outside world."

The most recent project tried to get villagers to tell their own stories.

"We tried not to be subjective, but listened to the villagers' narration," Guo said. "The villagers are the subjects of this project. Perhaps their words aren't as polished, their photos not as vivid, their films not perfect, but they presented something that was real and came from the heart."

"We still have many regrets," Wang said.

Because villagers were not involved in the fullest possible extent, communication was not always direct and open, she said.

During the project, village volunteers tried to record every aspect of Qiang culture. The older villagers who could not read or write told their stories and were recorded; villagers who were getting married also invited volunteers to record their ceremony.

While the book is complete, volunteers are currently working on editing a documentary to be shown around the country.

Event

Oil painting class for kids

Who says oil painting is a grown-up craft? Professional painters all had to start somewhere. The basics of oil painting will be taught at this workshop. The teacher, Elena Qian, comes from 3i Art and Pikka Kid's Library and knows how to guide kids into the world of painting.

Where: Suite A0753 Chao-wai SOHO, 6 Chaowai Dajie, Chaoyang District (near The Place and Central Park; one block west of Hujialou subway station)

When: 4-6 pm, every Sunday

Cost: 200 yuan per session; 1,440 yuan for 8 sessions (including supplies and entrance to the playground)

Tel: 5869 2904

Gypsy jazz jam session

Enjoy a night of jazz over nice drinks. The session is hosted by the Hot Club of Beijing. Free beer is offered to anyone who performs and a special "Django" cocktail with absinthe is only 40 yuan.

Where: Salud, 66 Nanluogu Xiang, Gulou, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30-11:30 pm, Tuesday every week

Cost: Free entrance

Tel: 6402 5086

Book swap and board games at Sequoia

Buying imported books is expensive, but there's another way: swap your old books for new ones at Sequoia. There are hundreds of books available, from non-fiction to thrillers. There are also board games, coffee and snacks.

Where: Sequoia, Jianwai Diplomatic Compound, Chaoyang District

When: 2-6 pm, first Saturday of every month

Tel: 15811243464

Cost: Free

Electric bike night tours

Want to explore Beijing at night? Get on your e-bikes and join us in this adventurous experience. You'll have a night to remember. Visit bjebiketours.com for detailed information about the tours.

Where: Unit 1202, Tower 2, Building A, FengHua Towers, Xuanwu District

When: 6:30-10:30 pm, Friday every week

Cost: 300 yuan (including dinner)

Email:

momo.qing.han@163.com

Hutong tour

Beijing's hutong are full of mysterious stories, legends and culture. Explore the hidden history of Old Beijing and experience the daily life of a Beijinger.

Where: Jiudaowan Hutong, Beixinqiao, Dongcheng District

When: 10 am - noon, Saturday every three weeks

Email:

info@thehutong.com

Cost: 120 yuan per person (including snacks and teas)

(By Wei Xi)

The best way to experience Beijing is on a bike



Biking in Yanqing County
CFP Photo

By Chu Meng

Cycling is a unique way to explore Beijing, especially during the summer days. People can get up close and personal with an ancient civilization and progressing society all at once.

The 10 best bike routes in the city's urban area and the best 10 bike routes in the northern outskirts of Yanqing County were officially announced by the Beijing municipal government's Civilization Office, Beijing Municipal Commission of Transportation and Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau last Sunday.

About 1,000 cyclists participated in the opening ceremony, joining in a friendship biking competition along a 34-kilometer Niumanggou route, one of the 10 best in Yanqing.

Among them were 24 foreign riders who were members of Bike Kingdom, a foreigner-oriented bike club in Beijing known for organizing group bike tours and facility renting for expats.

The 10 best bike routes in Yanqing include the Qianjiadian 100-meter water corridor route, Guihe River ecology corridor route, Longqing Valley route and Sihai Pearl Spring, covering 256 kilometers in total.

The 10 best bike routes in the city's urban area include from Chaoyang Park to Ritan Park, from the Temple of Heaven to Huangchenggen and from Yuanmingyuan Park to Guangming Bridge.

"We enjoyed the bike ride very much. It is an environmentally friendly, convenient and econom-

ical means of travel in Beijing. Also, it is a very informative way to experience the city, because we can learn a lot more about Beijing through its famous hutong or through the majestic mountains," said Veronica Carnell, a 34-year-old British cyclist.

"Also, bike riding in the city is safe and healthy. The whole city is flat like a pancake. It can be done at a pace we can cope with. An all-round excellent trip," Carnell said.

In order to strengthen service quality and better cater to domestic and international bike fans, a total of 11 service centers and 35 staging posts were also established along all routes.

There are also helpful signs along cycling routes and maps available, with more than 2,000

bicycles for rent at some 30 different spots, making cycling more convenient for everyone.

This October, Beijing will hold a professional cycling competition, turning Yanqing's Gulong Road and Xianglong Road into major circuits. Detailed information for the event and registration are available at bjeyclingtour.net, or call the Yanqing County Tourism Office at 6910 1011.

Yanqing County Government Cycling Club

Group tour reservation: 69149599

Bike rental: 6914 9599

Age limit: 16 to 60 years old

Open: 8:30 am - 5:30 pm

Cost: 5 yuan per hour, 30 yuan per day, 50 yuan for two days. A 500 yuan deposit is required

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

Hi, I just moved to Beijing from Singapore and am looking for good waffles. Waffles can be found in almost every shopping mall, food court or coffee shop, but I don't know where I can buy good waffles in Beijing. I really miss the nice smell!

In Beijing, most cafes and bakeries sell waffles, and the three most popular ones are Morel's, Bean Tree and Wild Honey.

Owned by a Belgian chef, the waffles at Morel's are among the best in Beijing. The outside is slightly crunchy, while the inside is fluffy. You can choose different toppings, and the prices range from 35 yuan to 50 yuan. It is located on Gongti Bei Lu.

Homemade waffles at Bean Tree, a little cafe, are served with a scoop of ice cream, a dollop of whipped cream and fruit slices on the side. Waffles are formally 33 yuan, but you can get a 10 percent discount on Tuesdays. Location: Huaqingjia-yuan North Gate, Building 6

Waffles at Wild Honey are more American-style than European. You can choose maple syrup or cream for the toppings for 24 to 38 yuan, or get a chocolate banana waffle for 42 yuan. Location: Fortune Mall, 7 Dong Sanhuan Lu.

Can anyone recommend a beauty salon that waxes or threads or in any way removes eyebrow and upper lip hair? Ideally, I would like to find somewhere near the Sanlitun area.

Daisy's on Guanghua Lu in the 100 Sunshine building (close to Wanda) is recommended by many people. They have English speaking staff and the price is OK. Another recommended salon is Roots Hair & Esthetics on Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu. You can call 6538 1626 for detailed service descriptions and prices.

My friend and I are planning to go shopping at Yashow or Silk Market. We know we can bargain there but just have no idea how much we can bargain off. Can anyone tell us how much the products usually are?

The prices for normal products are listed below:

Socks 2 to 4 yuan, sport shoes 40 to 60 yuan, dress shoes 50 to 150 yuan, shirts 20 to 30 yuan, pants 35 to 80 yuan, underwear 3 to 5 yuan, belts 20 to 30 yuan, earrings 2 to 20 yuan, wallets 10 to 50 yuan, hats 8 to 25 yuan, and gloves 10 to 20 yuan.

(By Wei Xi)

Walking festival invites participants

By Zhao Hongyi

The second Beijing International Mountain Walking Festival is set to open on September 10 in Mentougou District.

The organizer is calling for interested individuals to participate. Registration can be completed at bjwalking.com.

The festival consists of various walks on five designed routes through the beautiful scenery of the mountainous district.

Along the tracks, there is Cuandixia Village - a well-known Chinese historical area - Huang-caoliang natural scenic spot, Zhaitang reservoir, and Ming and Qing river castles.

The festival integrates sports, culture, tourism and folklore. It meets the general public's growing demand for diverse activities.

The 30-kilometer remote and natural route and 20-kilometer ancient village route on September 10 are the most eye-catching items. On the second day, the 20 kilometer reservoir route and



Competitors are cheered at the finish of the 20-kilometer walk last year.

Photos provided by bjwalking.com

10-kilometer red revolutionary route are the hot tickets.

In addition, there will be a 100-kilometer walk on each of the two days, which will be very challenging to every participant. However, the long walks are only available to professional competitors, according

to the organizer.

The walking festival is hosted by the municipal bureau of sports, organized by Mentougou District government and arranged in Zhaitang Town, a famous tourist destination due to its natural environment, beautiful scenery, rich history and splendid culture.

By He Jianwei

There's nothing like the pressure of an international competition to bring out the stars. Since the 1970s, more than 80 percent of the world's ballet stars have proven themselves by winning awards at international ballet competitions.

In an effort to identify new talent and promote collaboration with international artists, the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA) initiated the first Beijing International Ballet and Choreography Competition earlier this month. Two dozen dancers and choreographers were presented with awards on July 16.

But were they deserving? The competition, most would agree, was a disappointment. At seminars that were held throughout the 10-day event, experts expressed concerns about ballet's sustainable development.

Mining for talent

Ballet competition turns up more duff than diamonds

Exhausted young dancers and choreographers trickled into the NCPA's Resource Center on the morning of July 16. After nine fierce competitions in eight days, the contestants were now enduring the toughest part: the wait for the results. The NCPA's artistic committee, appeared, its only disappointing news.

"You will learn who won gold, silver or bronze at the closing ceremony later in the evening," he said. By itself, this news would have been acceptable. But contestants learned that three major awards – the Grand Prix Fund of Ballet Arts for choreography, the gold medal for the best dancer and the Special Award for choreography – would not be given.

"Our plan was to pick 50 finalists, but only 56 contestants came to Beijing," Zhao said. "This was the first time we held an international competition in Beijing for ballet. May be potential contestants are not so many as in the past competition as worthwhile."

Ma Xiaodong from the National Ballet of China (NBC) won the Grand Prix Fund of Ballet Arts for dancers; Zhao Xintu, also from the NBC, won the gold medal; and Lee In Soo from South Korea won gold for choreography.

As the artistic director of the NCPA and former director of NBC, Zhao was the competition's initiator. "In the past three decades, Chinese ballet has made great progress," she said. "Our dancers have won dozens of gold medals since first attending international competitions in 1980. We have our own repertoire on the world stage. We should have our own competition. One day it will attract many talented young dancers from around the world."

Competition is very important for young artists. "Winners not only get money, but jobs," Zhao said. To prepare for the competition, she visited New York earlier this year. She met a Russian couple who had organized a competition with more than 400 contestants ages 9 to 26. Many directors and teachers from different companies went to the competition and offered contracts to the best dancers.

Most Chinese dancers would like to go to European or American companies, but selfishly speaking, I hope the competition will help Chinese companies retain promising Chinese dancers," Zhao said. She said the nine dancers who attended the Prix de

Lausanne in 2009 all got offers from European companies, so they left the country. Tamara Rojo, principal ballerina with The Royal Ballet, said she thinks the influx of Chinese dancers to foreign markets is good for Chinese ballet. "I started in 1990, and now I'm more famous than I would've been had I stayed," she said. "If a Chinese dancer becomes famous on the world stage, he or she can go back to China and share the experience with the younger generation. More children might go to dance school because of his or her influence."

Still, Zhao would like to see the domestic competition raise the stature of Chinese ballet. She invited international judges to participate in the judging panel, including Doris Laidner, chair of the jury and general manager of the Helsinki International Ballet Competition, and Ruslan Pronin, general manager of the Ballet of the Bolshoi Theater.

Judges gave suggestions to each contestant in addition to grading them. "I think you have a very good communication," said Ma, the winner of the Grand Prix Fund of Ballet Arts for dancers. "We aren't as good at expressing emotions and confidence on stage."

As for the choreography competition, this year's competition included a choreography award. "As an NBC director for 15 years, I've often been consumed by trying to find a good choreographer, always perform Marquis

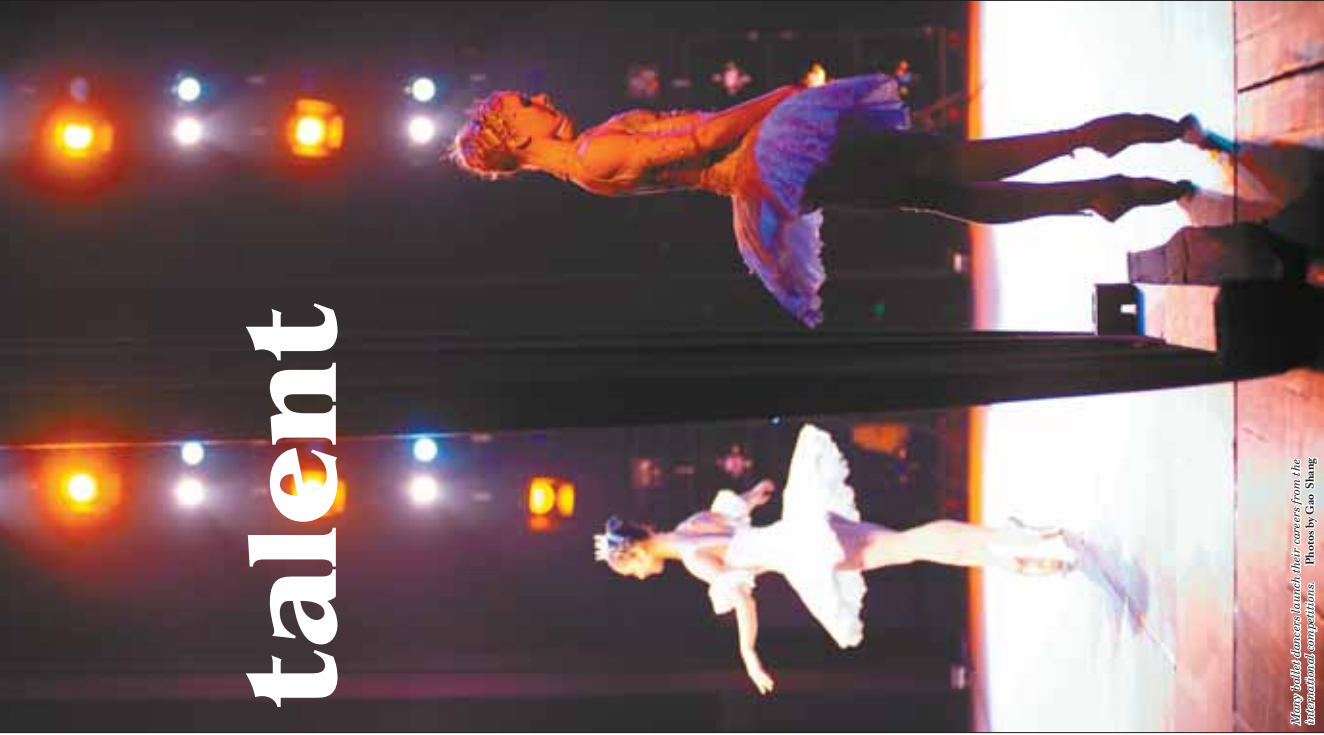
Petipa's works. When The Royal Ballet or the Paris Opera invites us, they would like to see original works, such as *Raise the Red Lantern*."

She said there are many choreographers who are good at making short programs in China, but not many who can do a full-length program. "It's a pity that I couldn't attract more excellent choreographers as my company director," she said. "I asked the Chinese choreographers will come out of this competition."

Lin Hwei-min, founder and artistic director of Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance, was the chairman of the judging panel for choreography. He was moved by the contestants' creativity and ambition. He had two pieces of advice. First, technique is everything. "I've said, 'Most of the time, technique is not the emotion in their works. Always remember that dancers are not machines. Second, please take more time to listen to different kinds of music. It will train your sensibility to music and give you more choices for your work.'"



Zhao Xintu (left) was awarded the ballerina gold medal.



Young ballet dancers launch their careers from the data and hard competitions. Photos by Cao Shuang

talent

“Technique is not everything. Most contestants emphasize technique over emotion in their works. Always remember that dancers are not machines.”



Young Chinese dancers attending a master's class during the competition. Photo provided by NCPA

“If a Chinese dancer becomes famous on the world stage, he or she can go back to China and share the experience with the younger generation. More children might go to dance school because of his or her influence.”



European dancers at the Beijing International Ballet and Choreography Competition.

“Many good Chinese dancers would like to go to European or American companies, but selfishly speaking, I hope the competition will help Chinese companies retain promising Chinese dancers.”

Netherlands hosts Beijing International Book Fair

By Han Manman

Dutch princess Laurentien, Amsterdam Mayor Ann Thane and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair will participate in the upcoming 18th Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF), from August 31 to September 4, at the new China International Exhibition Center in Shunyi District.

With the slogan "Open Landscape, Open Book," this year's host country, the Netherlands, will bring almost all of the major publishing houses and 25 famous authors to the book fair, said Machtelt Schelling, cultural attache and spokesperson at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Beijing.

Schelling said local audiences will experience dynamic and rich Dutch culture from a country that has excelled in art, design and architecture, both from related books and an exchange of ideas with Dutch authors.

According to her, there are also eight exhibitions illustrating the full range of Dutch books during the fair. These

include exhibitions on Vincent van Gogh and his life in letters, 12 Dutch illustrators, the sinologist Robert van Gulik and literature in comic strip form by artists such as Joost Swarte and Peter Pontiac.

Dick Bruna, who is well known as a graphic designer due to his creation of the cartoon *Miffy the Rabbit*, will also present the "Year of the Rabbit" with Miffy during the fair.

Schelling said reading classical Dutch literature through film will be one of the most wonderful ways to experience best-selling Dutch books. At the end of August and beginning of September, six unique Dutch features will be screened in the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) Arts Cinema.

All six films are based on very successful Dutch novels and are award-winning films in their own right. Of these six movies, *Minoes* by Annie M.G. Schmidt, *Out of Mind* by J. Bernlef and *Love Life* by Kluun have been translated into Chinese and published in China, and *The Letter for the King* by Tonke Dragt will be published

in Chinese soon.

More than 2,000 exhibitors from 60 countries will join this year's book fair. The exhibition consists of four sections: domestic publications, overseas publications, digital publishing, and periodicals and library purchases, according to Wu Wei, vice chairman of the BIBF organizing committee and vice president of China National Publications Import and Export Corporation.

Wu said big names such as Blair and American author John Naisbitt will launch their new books during the book fair.

He also disclosed that next year's BIBF host country is South Korea.

As one of the top four international book fairs in the world, BIBF has been held annually in Beijing at the end of August or at the beginning of September since 1986. Every year, publishers from around the world converge on Beijing and meet with their local colleagues, making the BIBF the most important platform for international publishing exchanges in China.



The Netherlands will present literature in comic strip this August.

Photos provided by BIBF

Recalling the fate of Chinese women in the late 20th century



My Schoolmates
334pp, 35 yuan



My Love
328pp, 29.8 yuan



My Parents
324pp, 35 yuan



My Teachers
323pp, 35 yuan

By Li Zhixin

As a scholar studying contemporary Chinese history and culture, Ding Dong recently compiled and published a set of four books looking at the lives of Chinese women in the second half of the last century. Dozens of women from all walks of life gathered in the Lady Book Salon for the book launch last Saturday to share their stories and understanding with writers on Chinese women's attitudes toward love, family, teaching and friendship.

The four books are *My Parents*, *My Love*, *My Teachers* and *My Schoolmates*. The 91 essays embodied in this series are written by female writers.

"History is made up of each detail. If you want to know history well, just learn from the details of people's lives," Ding said. "And through a woman's perspective, we can have a

more exquisite knowledge of our history, social development and culture as well as experience of their transformation in the second half of last century."

Shen Rui, a writer who is now a language and literature professor at the US Naval Academy, recalled from the essay collection her friend Yao Jingyun's death in 1982 and the impact on her.

Yao was a taxi driver in Beijing at that time and was often sexually molested by her vehicle team leader. Because there was no law to protect women from sexual harassment and no organizations to turn to at the time, she cast all the hatred to Tian'anmen Square by crashing her car into the Golden Gate Bridge, killing five people and injuring 19 others.

Yao was condemned to

death on the charge of offending public security in a dangerous way at the age of 23.

"Chinese women got used to putting up with sexual harassment before as sexual harassment was a strange concept at that time," Ding said. "But as feminism began to gain hold, women began to realize they could resist instead of swallowing such an insult."

"If she was in a society with a sound legal system, she maybe wouldn't have done such a thing," she said. "Women at that time lacked judgment, courage and were very innocent about sex."

Yao's death also stimulated the writer to think more about women's rights, the view of friendship between men and women and the change of Chinese society in the following years, she said.

Li Nanyang, the daughter

of Li Rui, a former senior official in the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, recalled her father's tragic marriage in her essay as he divorced and reunited with her mother several times.

"My father was a well-cultured and modest man but my mother was just the reverse. She was deeply influenced by various political doctrines. Even when they had a quarrel, she always quoted from those doctrines and even judged the familiarity among family members with class consciousness," she said.

"Politics was deeply penetrated in people's lives, even in their emotional life. In that age, women's aesthetic interests and expectations were strongly shaped by the age, not from their own emotions," she said.

Bookworm book listing

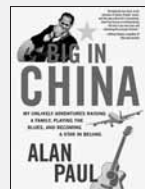
The Bookworm recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers.



Cutting for Stone

By Abraham Verghese, 667pp, Vintage, \$15.95

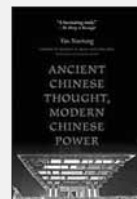
Marion and Shiva Stone are twin brothers born out of a secret union between a beautiful Indian nun and a brash British surgeon. Orphaned by their mother's death and father's disappearance, bound together by a preternatural connection and a shared fascination with medicine, the twins come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution. Moving from Addis Ababa to New York City and back again, the book is a story of love and betrayal, medicine and ordinary miracles.



Big in China

By Alan Paul, 272pp, Harper, \$25.99

Based on his award-winning *Wall Street Journal Online* column, "The Expat Life," this book explores Alan Paul's unlikely three-and-a-half-year journey of reinvention in this rapidly developing metropolis. He reveals the challenges that he and his family faced while living in a foreign land, including reaching beyond the expat community, coming to terms with his new role as a stay-at-home dad, and learning to navigate and thrive in an unfamiliar culture.



Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power

By Yan Xuetong, 312pp, Princeton University Press, \$29.95

Policy advisor Yan Xuetong examines the lessons of ancient Chinese political thought for the future of China. He argues that political leadership is the key to national power and that morality is an essential part of political leadership. Providing new insights into the thinking of one of China's leading foreign policy figures, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in China's rise or in international relations.

(By He Jianwei)



Eliza Yang

By Chu Meng

In Beijing, there is a small group of people who have quit their 9-to-5 routine jobs and decided to set themselves free. They have become baristas, or, in other words, coffee makers.

They keep traveling around the world, making coffee and volunteering for social projects in a diverse cultural environment. Eliza Yang, a barista and a cafe owner in Beijing, is one of them.

Currently, as with all other members of this growing group, she has been away from home and metropolitan cities for months. Through doing so, she said she means to bring the real concept of volunteering and social work back to Chinese youngsters.



Eliza Yang organized a traveling baristas' group in Beijing

Photos provided by Eliza Yang



Traveling baristas make coffee and do volunteer work on their trips around the world.

Be a traveling barista

French-Chinese Sun Tingting recently decided to settle in Beijing for about two weeks during she and her husband's one-year-long Asian trip. This pair of low-budget travel zealots found a secret, lovely place in the city.

Come rain or shine they like to go walking around the Imperial Palace to feel the soul of Beijing. About 30 meters south from Donghuanmen, steps away from the Imperial Palace on the west road, sits Poetry Café.

Sitting down inside this travel-themed coffee shop, they each love to order a cup of espresso and one serving of the signature tiramisu.

"I know this shop because of a recommendation on Douban, my backpacking friends. It is a tourism-themed coffee shop. Almost every Sunday there are tourists meeting to show photos and talk about their travel experiences," said Sun.

Surprisingly, unlike the other thousands of coffee shops in Beijing, backpackers can get free coffee, desserts and accommodation at Eliza's place, if only he or she volunteers to do work making coffee, serving visitors, and, most importantly, sharing travel stories with others.

Poetry Café is 28-year-old Eliza Yang's business. Opened only for two years, she opened this 15 square meter bar for domestic and world travelers who need a cozy station during the trip.

Yang, a professional graphic designer, came to Beijing with her two classmates seven years ago after graduation from her hometown in Shandong province. All three of them luckily found decent jobs in a graphic design firm with good salaries.

All of them have been low-budget traveling fans since high school. "I had my ever first trip all by myself when I was 16, thanks to my parents' trust in me," Yang said. "Even when I worked in Beijing, we seldom spent weekends in this city. And a 10-day or 20-day trip would also happen every two months."

They usually rushed directly to railway stations from the office after Friday's work, stepping onto any of the trains that set out immediately. Hours later they got off that train before midnight, staying the night in whatever towns the train brought them to.



"For longer trips, we usually have to find part-time jobs at local bars. It was never too hard for us. For one of us can play guitar and sing pop songs, and the other can draw extraordinary sketches for visitors," Yang recalled.



Eliza Yang's traveling barista group helped an orphanage in Malaysia.

But in 2008, during their weekend trip in Tangshan, a city reborn after a devastating earthquake in 1976, by chance they met a group of Spanish backpackers in a small coffee bar and learned that they traveled to that remote city across the ocean just to do some volunteering in the hundreds of orphanages in Tangshan.

Later she learned that there was a kind of backpacker in European countries called "traveling baristas." First of all they are low-budget, environmentally friendly travel zealots. Second, they all do volunteering for little to no pay along their trips around the world.

Since then, Yang's group of three began to follow suit. One year after meeting the group of Spanish social workers, Yang quit her routine and stressful job and opened Poetry Café at Nanchizi in July 2009, marking one of the first coffee shops in China to welcome traveling baristas.

Thanks to Yang's efforts to share new lifestyles, more and more such coffee shops have appeared across the country, with most of them located in prosperous tourism destinations. The number of baristas who are in love with travel and volunteer-

ing work has also grown.

"I would like to see the number grow further. We have about 15 such baristas registered in Poetry Café's online community. They are in Qinghai, Sichuan and Guangdong provinces. I would more like to see more and more young backpackers become part-time social workers on their trips," Yang said.

"The first task of the traveling barista community is not to serve coffee. Rather, it aims to influence more Chinese youngsters about what volunteering is and how should they be involved in it while traveling around the country. There are ways to do low-budget travel. But that is far from enough. There should also be ways to do volunteering travel," Yang said.

Because of her love for coffee, Yang studied from the industry's most famous coffee master, and learned to use the most expensive on-site roasted coffee beans.

She joked that she does not even make food that compromises the aroma of coffee, so in addition to dessert, the cafe has only salad, pizza, sandwiches, pasta and other light foods.

Sun said, in addition to coffee, many people come for the love of travel, as they can easily find like-minded friends. Traces of world travel can be found everywhere in the cafe. This atmosphere is casual, friendly and homely.

Thanks to help from traveling baristas like Sun, Yang's coffee shop can have three baristas in an average working day. The number could rise to more than 10 during the weekend.

Yang set her feet free once again on a three-month southeast Asian trip in June.

She stayed at a coffee shop featuring white coffee in Malacca, Malaysia for two weeks. She also helped out a coffee booth vendor three hours each night in an open-air night market in a Vietnamese border town for five days.

Moreover, she gave drawing classes to children at local orphanages on each stop during her trip.

"Travel is not about abandoning our burdens and responsibilities in the cities we live in. Instead, it is a way of teaching us how to bear burdens and responsibilities when we get back to our normal life," Yang said.



Ceramic kitchenware combines function and beauty

By Annie Wei

Ceramics serve a practical purpose, but Jiang Xue Zi is among a special breed of ceramists who truly believe in the artistic quality of the craft.

She said her passion was ignited 15 years ago after touring a local market.

"When I worked in Beijing in 1995, I visited Panjiayuan antique market every weekend and started becoming interested in ancient ceramics," she said. "My only hobby since then has been collecting them."

After visiting a modern ceramic exhibition by Chinese ceramist Zhu Legeng at the National Art Museum of China in 1997, she realized ceramics could be artistic.

After visiting the first biannual international ceramic exhibition in Icheon, South Korea in 2001 and attending many workshops there, Jiang learned that ceramic kitchenware is linked with dining culture in South Korea.

She saw how South Korea was trying to reinvent ceramic design, and thought China could do the same.

After making up her mind to study ceramic design, Jiang enrolled to Hongik University in South Korea, graduating last year with a Master's degree. Her study focuses on daily ceramic product design.

Jiang currently teaches at a university in Shanghai. She also rents a workshop in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, known as the "porcelain capital."

After studying in South Korea for six years, Jiang has learned that being a designer requires being a craftsman and an artist at the same time.

In South Korea, ceramists work with food curators to present an eclectic dining experience – "livable art," Jiang said.

"To design and produce ceramic products and use them in daily life, to make sense of their function and beauty," she said.

Her lily series of food containers are not only beautiful, but expresses her views toward life.

Jiang uses light and plain colors, simple and neat patterns. The highlight is the handle, a piece of processed wood approximates nature.

All products are handmade by Jiang herself.

"It's hard to tell how long each piece takes because it depends on the weather, the difficulty in shaping, design and firing," Jiang said. "But I have to be patient and complete each item step by step."

Anyone interested in her products can contact her at jiang7351@hanmail.net or 13097231599.



Ceramist Jiang Xue Zi



Jiang Xue Zi's ceramic works start from 500 yuan for small, 1,500 yuan for medium and 2,000 yuan for a large piece

Photos by inthatgarden.com



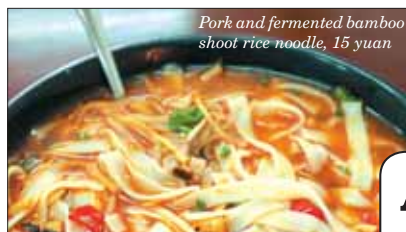
Fried beef and fermented bamboo shoots, 35 yuan



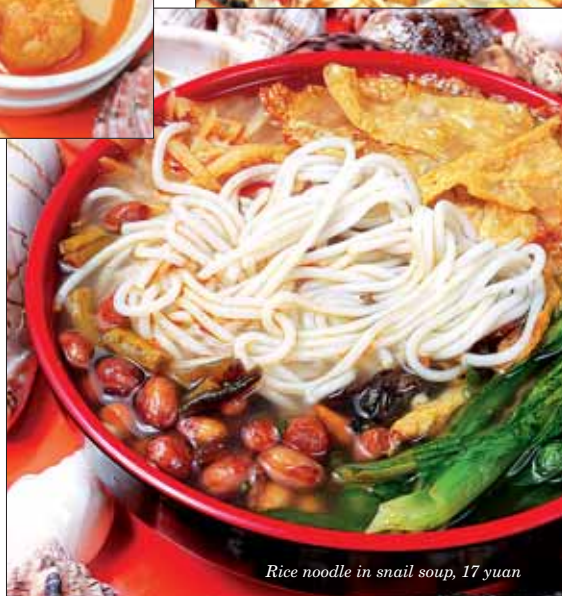
Tofu, 3 yuan

Photos by Lu Di

A pair of restaurants for your pleasure



Pork and fermented bamboo shoot rice noodle, 15 yuan



Rice noodle in snail soup, 17 yuan

By Annie Wei

This week, *Beijing Today* scouted two eateries popular among diners who seek authentic regional dishes at reasonable prices.

One restaurant, opened by a southern writer, has attracted investment interest from more than 20 institutes and people. The other was opened by a Korean mother who moved to Beijing to open a home-cooking restaurant for students like her daughter.

A taste of Korean family cooking

By Wei Xi

The Jin's at Weigongcun in Haidian District may seem a bit shabby, but this is the place to go for authentic Korean home cooking at just the right price.

Located near Beijing Foreign Studies University, the Beijing Institute of Technology and Central University for Nationalities, The Jin's is frequented by many students, particularly Koreans.

The Jin's was first opened in March 2006 in Chaoyang District, with only seven tables. It has expanded to 16 tables and recently opened an outlet near Beijing Jiaotong University.

The restaurant is run by a Korean family surnamed Jin who came from Yanji, Jiling Province. The head chef, 50-year-old Qian Yanshu, is the matriarch of the family.

"We moved to Beijing when my daughter was enrolled at Central University for Nationalities," Qian said. "She said the Korean restaurants nearby were too expensive for students like her. I know my cooking is tasty, so I decided to open a restaurant."

Qian said the menu was made according to traditional Korean ethnic food, and the price of each dish was set by her daughter and her classmates.

Tangfan (starting from 12 yuan), a mixed soup served in a hot stone pot with rice, is the most popular. There are different kinds of soups, such as tofu, kelp,

beef, potato and codfish. Most of the soups are salty and a little spicy, but you can ask for mild ones.

The cold noodle dish (10 to 12 yuan) is frequently ordered during summertime. Choose between wheat flour noodle or soba noodle, mixed with pickled cabbage, cucumber, beef, egg and Korean chili sauce.

The noodles are soaked two hours before cooking, and comes out chewy, sour and sweet.

Shiguobanfan (18 yuan), rice in stone pot, is well done. The rice is steamed first, then put in a stone pot with carrots, lettuce, bean sprouts, fiddleheads, cresses, beef, eggs and Korean chili sauce.

The Jin's also has a number of smaller dishes, such as potato pie (10 yuan), pickled cabbage pie (10 yuan), omelet (15 yuan), fried tofu (10 yuan) and various cold dishes. Qian said the vegetables were bought at a nearby vegetable market, while the other raw ingredients come from their hometown or South Korea.

"The taste is good because we make it with our heart and cook according to our home recipes," Qian said.

The Jin's

Where: 6 Weigongcun Xiaoku, Haidian District (near the south gate of Beijing Foreign Studies University)

Open: 10 am - 10:30 pm

Tel: 5928 4655

Cost: starting from 15 yuan per person

Weibo-popularized Guangxi eatery

By Annie Wei

Luosifen, rice noodle in snail soup, is a signature street food commonly seen in the streets of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Its special flavor and strong fermented bamboo aroma might not suit everyone's tastes, but those who like it can't get enough.

Mr. Luosifen, a humble eatery in western Beijing, run by a Guangxi writer named Ma Zhongcai. It has developed quite the reputation among young diners, who have been persistent about promoting it on Sina Weibo.

Its luosifen (13 yuan for small and 15 yuan for a large bowl) is prepared with fresh snails. The rice noodle is shipped from Guilin, as well as the fermented bamboo shoots, dried turnip and dried papaya. One can make it more tasty by adding a serving of fungus fuzhu (roll of dried tofu strips, 5 yuan), egg stewed in snail soup (1 yuan) or pickled beans (3 yuan).



Stewed intestine, 35 yuan

Homemade pepper sauces can spice it if requested; the restaurant also prepares diced zhitianjiao, a small chili from Guangxi that's very spicy, or homemade pickled peppers and green pepper soaked in rice vinegar.

Other dishes worth trying include qicun (35 yuan), deep-fried stewed intestine with crispy skin and a tender and chewy texture, and suansun chaoniurou (35 yuan), fried beef with fermented bamboo shoots and fermented soybean.

A limited amount of fried snails (17 yuan) are served daily. The bigger snails originally come from fields in southern China, tasting fresh and slightly sweet. The restaurant can only purchase 10 kilograms of fresh snails every day. The dish is not available during lunch, and usually sells out at dinnertime in about an hour.

After a bowl of hot and spicy luosifen, try some Guangxi desserts to cool down your body, such as luohangou tea (3 yuan), a fruit originally from Guangxi that can soothe throat pain; lüdousha (5 yuan), a typical summer drink made of green bean boiled in water with sugar; and guilingao, herbal jelly (6 yuan). They are all light and sweet.

Mr. Luosifen delivers within the Guomao area.

Mr. Rice Noodle

Where: North gate of Pingleyuan Xiaoku, 2 kilometers east of Jingsongqiao, Dong Sanhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 10 pm

Tel: 13621367127

Cost: starting from 15 yuan per person



Rice in stone pot, 18 yuan
Photo by Wei Xi

Art: A Digital Philosophy

By He Jianwei

Japanese contemporary artist Tatsuo Miyajima has included LED digital counters in his installations for more than two decades, symbolizing the infinite cycle of life, death and rebirth.

The LED gadgets cycle through single-digit numbers at varying speeds, but zero never appears. When the numbers go blank, darkness becomes a substitute for zero.

"The light emitted by the LED counters symbolizes life, and the darkness of zero symbolizes death," Miyajima said on July 16 at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA).

Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust is his first solo exhibition in the mainland, and comprises three pieces of installations at the main exhibition hall of UCCA.

The first piece, entitled *HOTO*, is a stainless steel pagoda with many LED digital counters. "I drew inspiration from a Buddhist scripture that describes a glittering pagoda made up of diamonds, a metaphor for new life," he said.

In Buddhist philosophy, the pagoda also indicates the mourning associated with death. It was a few days after this year's devastating Japanese earthquake when he was invited by UCCA to do a show, so he decided to bring this piece to China. "This piece expresses my lament for the dead in

the earthquake," he said.

Floating Time is an installation with four floor screens on which the digital counter randomly floats and moves. The audience can walk on the screens where time is floating. In this piece, Miyajima explores the relationships between time and space.

The last piece is *Mega Death*, which was first exhibited at the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999. Made up of 2,400 blue LED counters, this piece is designed to create awareness and remembrance of man-made genocide in the 20th century.

"The estimated number of lives lost to war, violent conflict and genocide in the 20th century was as much as 167 million – we should remember the past. All the LED counters will go dark for several minutes, signaling the ultimate annihilation. After the darkness, the light will turn on again, representing rebirth," he said.

**Tatsuo Miyajima –
Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust**

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 8, daily except Mondays, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9269



Upcoming

Nightlife

British Sea Power

Originating from the northern English village of Kendal, British Sea Power is one of Britain's most promising young rock bands.

Where: Yugongyishan Club, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: August 3, 8:30 pm
Admission: 180 yuan advance purchase, 260 yuan on the door
Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in August

Concert

Myung-whun Chung and Asia Philharmonic Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 4, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-800 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Sun Yingdi Piano Recital

Where: Multi-functional Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 200-280 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Roger Lord Piano Recital

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaochengyuan Lu, Xicheng District

When: August 21, 7:30 pm
Admission: 20-100 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Dance

Rojas and Rodriguez's Flamenco

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 13-14, 7:30 pm
Admission: 160-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Crosstalk Travelers

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: August 5-7, 7:30 pm
Admission: 190-900 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Hysterics

Where: Nine Theater (TNT), Chaoyang Culture Center, 12 Jintai Li, Chaoyang District

When: August 25-28, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-200 yuan, 50 yuan for students
Tel: 6551 6930

Opera

Rigoletto

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 25-27, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-800 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

5 Friday, July 29

Movie Purple Butterfly (2003)

Starring Chinese mainland

actors Zhang Ziyi, Liu Ye and Li Bingbing, as well as Japanese actor Toru Nakamura, this film evokes the bustling, dense and increasingly dangerous Shanghai of the 1930s along with a developing love story.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 25 yuan
Tel: 8404 4166

Exhibition Future Supreme Solo Exhibition

Wan Zhenyu's works are full of imagination and interpretation of the future. He arranges for all kinds of people and incidents from the real world to meet by accident, giving rise to a strange sensory world. The works of the artist resemble a magic cube bringing

people into varied suppositions of fortunes.

Where: Art Seasons, 789 Art District, 2, Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 11, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9850

Nightlife Mama Funker

With a Brazilian powerhouse on guitar and vocals, a well-known and respected Chinese drummer, an extraordinary French pianist and a French Bass player, local band Mama Funker, in an anonymous individual's terms, "breaks down the place" and leaves the crowd wanting more at every venue they perform.

Where: Alanting, 1/F, Forte International Apartment, 235 Chaoyang Beilu, Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8571 5168

6 Saturday, July 30

Movie And Your Mother Too (2001)

The film tells the story of two

17-year-old best friends whose sexy, young girlfriends are headed to Italy for summer vacation. After a series of events, they learn things about each other never knew.

As their journey progresses, all three companions find themselves confronted with their innermost demons and desires.

Where: Instituto Cervantes, 1A Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5879 9666

Exhibition The Way of Chopsticks III Group Exhibition

Widely regarded as two of China's most prominent conceptual artists, Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen have pursued independent careers since the mid-'90s.

Where: Chambers Fine Art, Red No. 1-D, Caochangdi

Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 30, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5127 3298

Nightlife

Brain Failure Unplugged Concert

Famous Chinese punk band Brain Failure will present an unplugged concert this Saturday.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6401 5269



Sunday, July 31

Nightlife Waa Wei's Tour 2011 in Beijing

Waa Wei, a rising singer-songwriter from Taiwan, used to be the vocalist of famous indie band Nature Q; she is a creative artist and has an independent attitude toward music.

Where: STIX Pool Club, opposite Road 100, west of the north gate of Workers Stadium, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 250 yuan
Tel: 6404 2711

Exhibition Cold Blood

This group exhibition shows works by artists from Line Three Art Zone of Xiaozhou Village in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, where the artists live together in local villages.

Where: Amelie Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 2, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9698

Movie

Jaws (1975)

Steven Spielberg's early masterpiece of a shark terrorizing beachgoers on Amity Island scared cinema audiences like nothing before.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 6:30 pm
Admission: 25 yuan
Tel: 8404 4166

(By Xinji Letu)



Easily tired or depressed? Think about hypothyroidism

By Han Manman

Most people are familiar with hyperthyroidism, but few have knowledge about it due to non-specific symptoms. Doctors warn that since the public is not fully aware of the disease, the number of patients with hypothyroidism has risen rapidly in recent years in China, especially among pregnant women.

Tiring easily can be a disease

Chen Jieying, 32, used to be a high-energy person. She ran five kilometers every morning and was always the one to say "Go, go, go."

Last year, however, she found she started to change. She felt tired and sluggish every day and had no interest and energy to exercise.

She found her hands and feet were always cold and her periods were much heavier. Just getting up the stairs required a major effort. She also found that even though she ate less, she still gained weight.

Chen decided to go to the hospital to see if there was a problem with her health. A blood

test revealed that Chen had hypothyroidism. This was the first time that Chen had heard of the disease.

"Hypothyroidism is a very common disease. However, since the symptoms are not always apparent, many do not know they suffer from the disease," said Ning Zhiwei, doctor of department of endocrinology at Beijing Chaoyang Hospital.

Ning said the disease most commonly develops in adult women, and becomes more common with increasing age. However, it can occur at any age and can affect anyone.

Symptoms

Hypothyroidism is when a person does not have enough thyroid hormones. It is also called an underactive thyroid. This causes many of the body's functions to slow down. According to Ning, the most common underactive thyroid symptoms include:

1. Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms of hypothyroidism and can be excessive in some cases. You may find it difficult to get through your daily activities at times if your thyroid is underactive.

2. Depressive mood. Symptoms of low thyroid function often include depression. Both your mental and physical abilities are affected by this condition, and depression can become severe if your thyroid function is extremely low.

3. Concentration problems. Hypothyroidism symptoms can include concentration issues. At times you may feel like you are in a fog and cannot think straight.

4. Inexplicable weight gain. Sudden weight gain can occur without any changes in your diet or activity level. This gain is caused by low thyroid function and hormonal problems.

5. Muscle cramps. These cramps are a result of hormone deficiency, and they can become severe if your thyroid problem is not treated.

6. Numerous miscarriages. One of the most devastating hypothyroidism symptoms is frequent miscarriages and difficulties carrying a pregnancy to term. This is because a proper balance is required for a successful pregnancy and birth, and low levels of thyroid hormones affect this process.

7. Infertility. In addition to increased miscarriages, if you have an underactive thyroid you may be infertile and unable to conceive children without special infertility treatments aimed at increasing your hormones and thyroid function.

8. Skin changes. You can notice skin changes as a sign of thyroid problems, with dry and flaky skin becoming a problem. In addition, thyroid weight loss can actually cause your skin to become even drier and thinner, further aggravating this symptom.

9. Menstrual changes. One of the most noticeable hypothyroidism symptoms in women are changes in the usual menstrual cycle. You may notice your periods become irregular, and may be lighter or heavier than usual.

10. Coldness in your extremities. If you have noticed any signs of poor circulation in the hands, it may be a good idea to check with doctors.

"In the most serious situation, untreated hypothyroidism can lead to coma and even death," Ning said.

If you suffer from most or only a number of these signs and symptoms, you really should pay a visit to the hospital, Ning said.

Pregnant woman must pay great attention

Statistics from the Chinese Society of Endocrinology said that the hypothyroidism rate among pregnant woman is high in China, with nearly one in ten pregnant women having the disease.

"If you're pregnant or plan to have a baby and have an underactive thyroid gland, it's a must to keep taking your treatment," Ning said, adding, "Even if you have a mildly underactive thyroid with no symptoms, it's still important to get treatment."

"Not treating your underactive thyroid may harm your health or your baby's health," he said.

For example, you are at a higher risk of getting high blood pressure, bleeding, or having a stillborn baby if you don't get the right amount of thyroid hormones when you're pregnant. There's also a chance that your baby will be born with a low birth weight, Ning said.

"If you have hypothyroidism and hope to become pregnant, work with your doctor to make sure your hypothyroidism is under control," Ning said, adding that it's better for the woman to take thyroxine supplements two to three months before getting pregnant until the baby is born.

"If you are a woman who has hypothyroidism and you become pregnant, tell your doctor promptly. Close monitoring of your thyroid hormone level during pregnancy can promote normal fetal development and reduce the risk of miscarriage," he said.

Ning also warns that patients with thyroid problems should stop taking iodine as a treatment. He said that many hypothyroidism patients or people with thyroid related problems believe taking iodine is a way to reduce their problems, "but that is totally wrong."

According to him, Chinese people get enough iodine from their food. Eating more iodine can in fact aggravate symptoms.



CFP Photo

Causes and treatment

According to Ning, there are many causes of hypothyroidism and people need blood tests and thyroid scans to find out what's responsible.

He said 80 percent of hypothyroidism patients have inherited the problem. Other main causes include high stress levels and an abnormal autoimmune condition.

"Some patients live with hypothyroid symptoms for their entire lives, even while taking drugs," Ning said, adding that he has read many media reports which said hypothy-

roidism can be cured by changing diet or lifestyle, "but that's impossible!" he said.

"The only recommended treatment is to take a thyroxine supplement every day," he added.

According to Ning, treatment of hypothyroidism is typically a lifelong process. However not all patients need to take treatment. He said for those with minor hypothyroidism, they don't even need treatment.

"But pregnant women or women who want to get pregnant are the exception," he said.



By Zhang Dongya

A giant cup of beer, authentic German food and German waitresses and waiters... Beijing introduced the Munich Beer Festival on July 16 at the Xiedao Resort, trying to offer an exotic Bavarian beer fest to locals.

While enjoying German beer and food, visitors can also entertain themselves at the resort's carnival park. With dozens of recreational facilities, it's a great choice for a family get-together.



The first Beijing International Beer Festival was officially opened at the Xiedao Resort at noon on July 16. The festival is being co-organized by Schotenhamel, a long-time operator of the Munich Beer Festival in Germany, to assure an authentic German flavor. According to the German tradition, there was a grand opening ceremony after 12 salutes were fired. The festival will last until August and is expected to continue as an annual event in the future.

Located in east of Xiedao Resort, an ecological resort in Chaoyang Dis-

trict, the beer park covers a large area.

There are eight huge Bavarian-style buildings serving beer and food, with a total capacity of 50,000 people. Like the Munich Beer Festival, German beer and German food is available in each building. Visitors can see how beer is made through a glass wall. Meanwhile, a band gives performances on a central stage.

German beer girls serve in the buildings. They were selected in Germany and flew to Beijing last Thursday. There are also dozens of beer boys from Germany and some from Ukraine, all of them dressed in traditional German clothes for the festival. Some were waitresses in their country and have served at the Munich Beer Festival before, while others are still in college. They were trained before the event on

serving manners and unique techniques such as how to serve eight steins of beer at one time. They will also sometimes dance to entertain guests.

One German girl from Berlin has served at the Munich Beer Festival several times. She served six steins of beer one time for our table and showed her technique. Some guests tried it under her instruction and successfully held six steins at one time. Two German college beer girls said they were excited to be selected for the event. "All things are larger here, especially the beer tents. It is among the larger German beer festivals," one said.

A veteran server even carried 14 steins of beer, with seven in each hand. All beer-lovers and photographers saw her technique and applauded.

Besides fresh German beers, one can order German food including roast chicken, roast pork, roast mutton and roast sausage. There are also authentic German pretzels in both big and small portions.

Continued on page 21...



Photo by Song Jun



More than 200 German beer girls flew in for the Beijing Xiedao beer fest, adding an exotic flavor to the event. Photo by Song Jun



Photos by Mockingbird



Photo provided by Xiedao Group



Large recreational rides are set up in the park, which turns into a big carnival after people eat and drink.



Photos by Mockingbird



German beer waitresses show guests their technique to carry more than 10 steins of beer at one time.

Photo by Song Jun

...continued from page 20

All facilities and brewing skills were brought over from Germany to guarantee authenticity.

"I brought my family here to let them feel the German way of drinking and eating. I studied in Germany for two years and miss it very much. I also want to renew the good experience," a visitor named Anna said. "The beer is just fresh and good."

After enjoying beer and food, vis-

itors can head for the recreational park, which is equipped with 17 large rides, including a two-story carousel, flying chairs, a big pendulum and rollercoaster. There are also more than 30 game booths for families and children. It turns into a big carnival after people eat and drink.

More than 200 stands are set up to sell all kinds of handiwork and souvenirs, including the mascot of the beer festival, t-shirts

and all kinds of beverages. Visitors have to purchase a card before buying things in the stands, which do not accept cash. There are many spots issuing shopping cards, in value from 50 yuan.

During the beer fest, they will also hold activities such as a photography contest and a beer beauty contest. All the results will be announced at the closing ceremony in August.

Beijing International Beer Festival

Where: 1 Xiedao Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – midnight, until August 15

Tel: 400-6088-899

Admission: Free

Note: They provide a group of 500 designated drivers for drinkers. Drunken visitors can ask for details from the information center in each beer building.

Transportation

They offer 10 special lines to and from Xiedao Resort. Visitors can take the special buses

in Xuanwumen, Liuliqiao Bei Li, Xiyuan Transit Hub, the Water Cube, Beijing South Railway Station, Wangjing, north gate of Workers Stadium, Dongdaqiao, Sanyuanqiao and Guanzhuang to the resort. All the buses are free. The buses start from 9:30 am till 9 pm from the 10 spots and start from 11 am till midnight from Xiedao Resort to downtown areas. Departures are every 45 minutes before 3 pm and 20 minutes after this time.

You can also drive to the Capital Airport Highway and take the Weigou exit, then drive

along Dongwei Lu and turn right to Xiedao Lu. There is a large parking lot which can hold 5,800 cars, 200 coaches and 20 buses.

Otherwise you can take regular buses 418, 640, 641, 688 or 909 to Xiedao.

Accommodation

All beer buildings serve fresh beer and German food.

Pilsener and Wiesen are 90 yuan per stein. All roast food, including roast chicken, roast mutton, roast sausage and roast pork cost 70 yuan. A big portion of pretzels is 30 yuan (300g), and a small one is 20 yuan (150g).



They brew German beer on the spot with all facilities coming from Germany.

Photo by Song Jun

Dining



Biergarten opens at Swissotel Beijing

Summer is in the air, and with it comes the opening of our now famous Biergarten. Mark your calendar: fun, relaxation and pleasure begins May 5, 2011; sample international beers from around the world, taste delicacies created by our culinary team, meet friends, kick back, listen to tunes or simply enjoy your favorite brew.

The garden venue provides a respite from the city – enjoy sumptuous selections featuring the unique taste of Germany and Austria, including appetizers, bratwurst, chicken wings, burgers, fresh salads and sandwiches. Oh, and did we mention the beer ... come join us from 4 pm until midnight.

Where: Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6553 2288 ext. 2161

Email: F&Boffice.beijing@swissotel.com



The Peninsula Beijing Mid-Autumn mooncake

For the Mid-Autumn Festival on September 12, The Peninsula Beijing will introduce its renowned Peninsula Connoisseur range of mooncakes - a long-time favorite in Hong Kong. Made from a unique recipe created at The Peninsula Hong Kong, these delicacies consist only of the finest ingredients. The Peninsula Mini Egg Custard Mooncake and The Peninsula Premium Mooncake Gift Box are perfect choices for the season.

Where: The Peninsula Beijing, 8 Jinyu Hutong, Wangfujing, Dongcheng District

Cost: The Peninsula Mini Egg Custard mooncake includes eight pieces of mini egg custard mooncakes, 238 yuan; The Peninsula Premium Mooncake Gift Box includes 12 pieces of mooncakes in 8 flavors, 980 yuan. A 15 percent early-bird preferential rate will be available for orders placed prior to August 20, with no minimum order required. Special rates are available for bulk purchases of The Peninsula Mini Egg Custard Mooncakes.

Tel: 6510 6707

Email: diningpbj@peninsula.com



Summer cool and refreshing drinks at Dynasty Plaza

There's nothing nicer than an iced coffee to cool down and perk up during a hot day. With a range of unique iced coffee choices, such as Rainbow Ice Cream Coffee, Iced Coffee with Blue Curacao and Mexican Sunshine Iced Coffee, Dynasty Plaza is the best place to while away a hot summer day.

Combining the modern and traditional, the fruit tea, which is refreshing and thirst quenching and not overly sweet, is also recommended. The black teas flavored with natural fruit essences are also great during the summer.

Where: Dynasty Plaza, Sunworld Dynasty

Hotel, 50 Wangfujing Dajie, Beijing

Tel: 5816 8888 ext. 8

The first lounge bar Happy Hour

Buy one, get one free or unlimited drink selections for 150 yuan per person.

Where: Ground floor, Park Plaza, 97 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 5:30-7:30 pm

Cost: 150 yuan per person (15 percent surcharge)

Tel: 8522 1999 ext. 3607/Dining

Aviation

Jetstar bags three awards from Singapore's Changi Airport

Low fares leader Jetstar received three awards at the 6th Changi Airline Awards 2011 in Singapore on July 18.

The annual awards ceremony recognizes the achievements of airlines operating from Singapore's Changi Airport, based on passenger figures.

Singapore-based Jetstar Asia topped Changi's honor roll as the airline with the largest growth from Singapore, carrying more than 2 million passengers in 2010 - an increase of 53 percent from the previous year and ahead of last year's winner, Tiger Airways.

Australia-based Jetstar Airways took the honors for the second consecutive year for largest growth out from Southwest Pacific. Passenger totals exceeded 360,000 in 2010, translating to a 12 percent growth compared to the previous year.



Hotel



PÜROVEL Spa & Sport from Swissotel Hotels and Resorts

The new Pürovel Spa & Sport centers are to be gradually rolled out around the world within the Swiss?tel Hotels and Resorts international hotel chain. The idea is based on an Alpine-inspired solution for vital treatments and exercise within a modern, contemporary setting.

The new Pürovel Spa & Sport centers reflect Swissotel's commitment to natural materials and resources such as stone, wood, water and flowers, and are a reminder of the pure nature and invigorating mountain air of the Swiss Alps. It is an approach that makes sure guests do not forget they are staying in a hotel group with Swiss roots.

Pürovel signature massages are carried out using essential oils produced in Switzerland made from local herbs such as lemon balm, wild bergamot, clary sage, lavender and Douglas fir. Pressed rapeseed oil was chosen as a base because of its high level of unsaturated fatty acids and its special effectiveness in working the active ingredients into the skin. Both Pürovel's signature massages and the corresponding sports program are designed to invigorate and vitalize body and soul in harmony with the four seasons. Spring is the season of new life and renewal as well as a time of preparation. While summer represents the peak of time to improve performance, autumn stands for cooling down and regeneration prior to winter, a time of rest and relaxation.

"The rhythm of the four seasons in our native Switzerland inspired us to choose this approach, which focuses on restoring the balance between body and soul," said director Lilian Roten.

Event

Inter-Chamber of Commerce regatta

The second edition of the Inter-Chamber of Commerce regatta is back! This time we hope to see more nationalities pitting their wits against each other out on the water. This BSC-sponsored event promises a weekend of exciting sailing and racing and loads of opportunities to meet people from other countries as well as all walks of life. Participants will develop leadership skills and practice teamwork and interpersonal skills. This challenging and fun-filled event creates a meaningful experience for everyone.

Cost: Special package: 1,650 yuan per person, includes sailing, meals (breakfast, two lunches and barbecue dinner), accommodation (one night, twin bed) and transportation. This package is subject to terms and conditions.

Where: Beijing Sailing Center, 5005, 5th Floor, Zone A, Chaowai SOHO, 6B Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5900 0276

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to LI Zhixin at lizhixin@ynet.com.

Doom gathering, back to back

By Zhang Dongya

Last weekend, I went to visit a painting exhibition at a French gallery located in an old factory that is expected to be demolished in a couple of months. It is quite a good place that blends the old with the modern. However, it is destined to be removed, so we all have to accept its fate.

To commemorate the opening of the last exhibition here, the gallery prepared a farewell party. The start is an end, and the end is another start. They will move to a new place soon.

The curator announced the opening of the exhibition to applause. Then the atmosphere changed when she said this would be the last show at this venue.

Many old faces turned up in succession, with some I think I have met many times before but never said a word to.

Some looked at the paintings while others gathered in the yard, talking with wine. I talked with Stephanie, the gallery's planner, and was surprised to learn she would leave Beijing for her hometown in Jiangxi Province next week. Stephanie is an old staff member at the gallery and we have maintained cooperation with each other. I felt very sad that she would leave. "It is exhausting to live in Beijing sometimes, and I am longing for a cozy life in a small place – like my hometown," she said.

Then the curator – a French guy named Lionel, came by complaining about all the demolition of the old factory and Stephanie's resignation.

He was blushing due to his red wine – he is the sort of person who blushes after a drop of wine. He talked and talked, pouring his heart out about all his bad luck recently. More people gathered in our group, pricking up their ears.

"A complete mess! You know my partner bought me a crappy start-up company last week, and the stock fell out of bed already!" he shouted. "You



know my little Denden [his dog] – he chewed up my favorite flip-flop!"

People began to laugh and relax after learning about all the poor things that had happened to Lionel. Later, the crowd dispersed and people began to look at paintings and enjoy food and wine again. A newcomer – a young journalist at a Chinese art magazine – came to Lionel to introduce herself, exchanging name cards with the red-faced guy.

"I just heard you dropped from the bed last week. Are you okay now?" the

girl asked Lionel with caring eyes. "Sorry?" Lionel frowned.

The girl tried to repeat the bad things he had mentioned previously, but it made the guy more puzzled. I heard the girl say "fall out of bed" and suddenly knew the misunderstanding. The girl must have mistakenly related the stock's drop to Lionel himself.

I smiled and walked away. I don't think it was the right time to tell the French guy, since he was hapless enough and would not want to drop from bed again.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. Summer colds have different symptoms than winter colds.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZSD): It is academically not proper to use "than" here when it is in combination with "different." We first of all have to be clear about the usage of "to differ" and "be different." They used to be followed by the preposition "from" "in" or "with," but never "than." For instance, liners differ from other big ships in having a large superstructure. I differed from him about the severity of the crisis. I never differ from your plans. Similarly, when "to differ" becomes "to be different," the basic rule remains. For instance, American cars are different from ours. So, the sample sentence should be: Summer colds have different symptoms from winter colds.

Terry-Boyd Zhang (TBZ): I think this again shows the difference between the academic use of the language and the common, colloquial use of the language. If you use "than" in this case, either in your speaking and in your writing, everyone will be able to understand you, but some native speakers will think that the sentence "feels" uncomfortable (though they probably won't be able to tell you why!).

2. All paper umbrellas are made by hands.

ZSD: It is wrong to say "by hands" as an adverbial of manner or means. The idiom is by hand. For instance, the signature must be written by hand. The squirrel was brought up by hand. The letter was delivered by hand. As in the adverbial of means, it is usually the singular form of the word that is used. For instance, they went to Shanghai by airplane, by car, by train, or by boat. In many expressions, "hand" is used singularly. For instance, an old China hand, a good hand at silverware making. He asks for her hand in marriage. He sets his hand to the document. So, the sample sentence should be: All paper umbrellas are made by hand.

TBZ: True, the umbrellas are made by "hands" but the Professor is right! To be grammatically correct, you have to say 'hand.'

3. The explosion of dubious information on the Internet has made every day a possible April Fools.

ZSD: It is a matter of consistency here. When you say "every day," you have a corresponding term to match with it, such as day to day, or man to man. The sentence can be expressed in either way: The explosion of dubious information on the Internet has made every day a possible April Fools' Day, or the explosion of dubious information on the Internet has made every one a possible April fool. This example shows that logical consistency in writing is also very important.

TBZ: This example is an advanced level of mistake which is quite common. Two simple examples are: two cat (and the plural "cats" is forgotten) and the men shouts (the man shouts, the men shout). It is the logic that is important – sometimes you think something, but you do not write it out clearly enough for someone else to follow your thought process – so get someone to edit your work for you.

4. Some residents asked their children to not play in the nearby hills.

ZSD: This involves a question of word order. I think the sentence sounds a little bit awkward to me. It would be better to say: Some residents asked their children not to play in the nearby hills. In a negative infinitive, should it be "not to" or "to not"? Probably both are right. I read such a sentence a few days ago in the *International Tribune*: "To ask the question is to not understand her."

TBZ: Hmm. This is a tough one. It is a matter of emphasis – but why? And what is the grammatical logic behind it? I think, in the sample sentence, the verb is the infinitive "to play," so the "not" should go in front. It is ok but does sound awkward; a reader might easily miss the negation of "play." However the second sentence has the verb "is" (to be) in front of the infinitive, so the "not" goes in between "to" and "understand." The first sentence needs to emphasize "not," while the second sentence emphasizes "understand."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to lizhixin@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Politely refuse visiting

By Terry-Boyd Zhang

If you have small children in your house, this is a sign you might want on the bathroom door to remind yourself of patience and understanding for little ones. If you do not have small children, I will relate to you a fairly typical scenario.

Mother goes into the WC with new trashy magazine just in from the Old Country in hand. She locks the door, sits and starts to get comfortable, ready for business.

"Mom!"

Deep breath and politely refuse visiting. "Go away." Literally, according to the sign: Thank you (xiè, the first character). The refusal (jué). The visit (*canguan* also means "tour" or "look around").

"MOM!"

Politely, please don't disturb. "I'm in the bathroom!" Patience dwindling. "What?!" Back to the sign: Please (*qīng*). Do not (*wu*, also can mean "none" or "no"). Bother (*darao*, in other



words "interrupt").

The problem with the English on this sign is that the first half makes it sound like it should be hung on the inside of the door, not the outside. It sounds more like a reminder to the host to be hospitable, instead of a message to the visitor meaning, frankly, "Get lost" or, less politely, "Piss off."

The sign should say something like: Thank you for your visit but you may not come in to have a look around and please don't disturb us, because there would be no point anyway.

Because I took this photo in Mao'er Hutong, just off Nanluogu Xiang, I

can tell you firsthand that Wanrong's former residence is not behind this door. If you find Wuhao (a curated boutique and arts space), you will see that they have done a wonderful job of restoring her garden. In one of the rooms you can see a huge mirror that was given to Wanrong by emperor Puyi, her future husband.

Rather than being to the right of the garden, the home of the Emperor's second wife is to the left of her garden, absolutely gorgeous in its disrepair. However, now that you know that, please be polite in your visiting and don't disturb the ghosts that live there.



“ To reflect on life in rigorous living circumstances ”

By Wei Xi

Altitude and severe cold make life on the Tibetan Plateau plodding and difficult. Very few people come to stay, and even fewer locals are willing to leave.

Generation after generation, Tibetans split their time between their homes and temples, keeping to the dharma of Buddhism. More monasteries than villages are built on this land, serving to protect the souls of those who remain.

SECLUDED LIFE ON THE PLATEAU



The film explores retreat houses, tantric colleges, debate courtyards, dharma ceremonies and celestial burials.

Photos provided by Ma Li

At an elevation of 4,500 meters, life is almost impossible in Tibet, yet people have lived here for thousands of years.

The Tibetan Plateau's extremely unfriendly environment prevents lowlanders from establishing close ties with locals. As a result, Tibetan culture has developed mostly in seclusion.

The people formed their own unique ways of living and thinking. The majority of the people are followers of Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism), and they seldom leave the plateau.

Mirror of Emptiness, directed by Ma Li, is a documentary that depicts the lives and beliefs of Tibetans, especially the lamas.

"Before I shot this film, I always wondered how a person could survive in extreme conditions," she said. "My friend Gao Qunshu, director of *The Message*, suggested I pay a visit to the Sexu Monastery.

Sexu is a Buddhist monastery located in Shiqu County, Sichuan Province. The film also explores retreat houses, tantric colleges, debate courtyards, dharma ceremonies and celestial burials.

The film follows seven people: five lamas, a priest for celestial burials and a monk who has resumed secular life.

The first part of the film focuses on two lamas: 70-year-old Qiujia Lama, who has lived in retreats for 17 years and wants to do so for the rest of his life, and 40-year-old Gongqiu Lama, who has been on a retreat for two years.

"It is impossible to change one's rigorous living circumstances – people probably have understood this for a long time. So they invented a poetic way to spend their lives."

For Tibetan monks, the retreat helps them get away from secular temptations and cultivate their mind. They live alone in covert places, grounding themselves and bonding through language and worship.

Debating Buddhist doctrines and making sand mandala – geometric figures representing the universe – are also methods for cultivating the mind.

"I was astonished to see young lamas who were still kids debating such abstruse topics as whether a white horse and a black horse are of the same nature but with opposite forms," Ma said.

The mandala require seven lama painters spending seven days and nights to complete.

They use seven different colors of sand, then demolish the mandala after it is finished. The process symbolizes the impermanence of all things: everything is as sand.

One important scene from the film is of a celestial burial. "It is impossible to change one's rigorous living circumstances – people probably have understood this for a long time," Ma said. "So they invented a poetic way to spend their lives."

"They imagine their future lives as a heaven of happiness. They believe that the moment they lie silently on the platform and sacrifice their body to the cultures, their souls ascend to heaven."

Another part of the film tells

the story of a 78-year-old reincarnated lama called Axi Lama.

In Tibet, a reincarnated lama is believed to be a living Buddha and highly respected by the others. Axi Lama, therefore, is often visited by locals who ask him to read their fortunes and help them with their problems.

Ma said that though Axi Lama himself doubted his identity as a living Buddha and his forecasts were not always correct, he could provide some comfort for the temporal lives of followers.

"Local Tibetans have a strong belief in Buddhism, and many send their boys to the Sexu Monastery at a young age," Ma said. "They believe being a lama can be a blessing."

Ma had many memorable experiences during the three months she spent on the Tibetan plateau.

"I ran into trouble from time to time and received a lot of help from passersby who were making their way to the dharma ceremony," Ma said.

She also faced difficulties. Women, for instance, are traditionally not allowed to enter scripture halls.

It was only after winning the trust of the reincarnated lama – she followed him to many dharma assemblies in Qinghai and Sichuan provinces – that she was allowed to film inside scripture halls.

Eating was also a problem. Because food takes a long time to prepare on the plateau due to low air pressure, "we often couldn't get enough food," Ma said. "Passersby sometimes gave us snacks they had."

Despite the difficulties, Ma said she was able to get many of her questions answered throughout her filming journey.

"I did not set any frame before I shot the film. I shot everything that interested me and I believe the scenes that moved me were the ones that moved my audience," Ma said.

Although one can hardly evade the subject of religion while watching films like *Mirror of Emptiness*, Ma did not want her audience to focus too much on the religious aspect.

"I made this film not to preach, but to give people an idea of what life is like on the Tibetan Plateau," she said. "I often feel that the plateau where I stood is timeless."

